

Pray for the Dominican Mission Trip



On February 4th through the 13th a group of people from Buffalo Valley will travel to the Dominican Republic to serve the Church of the Brethren there. We plan on doing some construction work and community building in two different places. We will start in San Jose (not sure Dionne Warwick knows the way to this San Jose...if you're under age 35...Google it) where we will make repairs to a church building in a Haitian community. Then when that project is finished we will travel to another location to work on a church building in a very impoverished part of the country.

This is our third trip in three years to the Dominican. As most of you know the Hoover family has arrived in the Dominican Republic to serve full time there. They will also help us on the ground in the Dominican. Buffalo Valley has had the privilege to really help to "restart" the American church's involvement in the Dominican. Praise God for this outcome.

How can you help? Well, you can pray for our group. As this Lamplighter goes out, we might still need one or two people to go on the trip. We also need to raise about \$10,000 in materials for the work we will be doing and you will in the future be asked to contribute to that need.

Pastor Eric



Jesus is the gift that perfectly fits the size of every heart. May all that He is bring you all that you need at Christmas and throughout the New Year.

Operation Christmas Child



The Mission Ministry Team wants to thank all of you who helped to make this year, 2016, another record year! **With your help, we filled 454 shoe boxes!** That's 22 more boxes than last year's total.

In about a month, the Mission Ministry Team will begin planning for OCC 2017. We'll set a new goal and we're confident in the generosity of this Body of Believers that Buffalo Valley Church of the Brethren will once again break another record.

To God be the glory for your generous support of this mission and for all the children that will be touched in a tangible way by Jesus.

Brenda Eberhart

Merry Christmas - Feliz Navidad -

Joyeux Noel - Froehliche Weihnachten

No matter the language you use it is a special joy to wish people we care about a very special and blessed Christmas. The Hospitality and Communication Ministry Team would like to make it possible for you to **wish your church family a Merry Christmas.** We will have an area in the hallway (either by the Son Room or by the Nursery/Toddler Room – on the brick wall) for you to **hang a Christmas card, note, poem, drawing or other expression of Christmas greeting.** We hope you will take this opportunity to share the joy of Christmas with your church family. Also stop by and see what other church members are placing there. I am sure your heart will be warmed by their well wishes.



Marsha Libby



Senior/Beginner Exercise Class

It has been over a year in February since I started this class. The class has almost all new students. It is a slow and easy class to start an exercise program. We added the ball since the class first started which includes abs using the ball. It also includes light weights and steps. Anyone is welcome to come. I would recommend this class to start with.

Dan Hartman



Upcoming Special Events

Sunday, **December 11th** at **3 pm** is the **All Church Christmas Party!!!** There will be caroling in the community and afterwards hot soup, cookies and beverages! Volunteers are needed for food donations. Look for the signup sheet in the main entry.

January 3rd – Red Cross Blood Drive 
1 – 6 pm at the church

January 21st – Family Theme Night 
from **5:30 – 8 pm**

“Winter Wonderland” is the theme for the upcoming Family Theme Night!!! Come have a “cool” time with your church family. There will be special wintery games and food for all!!!

February 11th – Couple’s Banquet 
from **6 – 8:30 pm**

Watch for more details to follow.

Thank you,

Pam Kline, Special Events Coordinator

A New Look in the Way We Give

As a result of a decision at the Fall Council meeting our budget process will be changed. As of January 1, 2017 the **repayment of the building debt** has been **included in the General Fund Budget**.

Please combine your previous offerings to the two funds into one total General Fund offering effective January 1, 2017. An example of this would be that if someone gave \$300 to the General Fund and \$200 to the Building Fund for a total of \$500 at any time this past year, as of January 1, 2017 the total giving of \$500 would now be given to the General Fund.

If there are any questions they should be directed to one of the Finance Ministry Team members. Thanks again for your support of our church’s ministry.

Jim Brubaker

From Your Lead Pastor,



Did You Win the Election?

The country is still struggling with the results of our presidential election and many are disturbed because of who won the election. But I don't think that President elect Trump is the only winner. I actually believe that each of us can win the election. If you are still troubled by the election I encourage you to go to our website our iTunes and listen to my sermons on 9/25 and 10/2. How can we all win the election...even months after the election is over? Peter gives us the answer in 1 Peter chapter 2: **13** *Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— 16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.*

We win the election by our "doing good" which will silence the foolishness of ignorant men. Do good. Don't post mean things about people you don't even know on social media. Don't pretend to be a prophet regarding the future of America because of the election...that is unless God has specifically told you something. Do spend time conversing with those who feel threatened by the results of the election and who believe there is some uncertainty about their future. Followers of Jesus have a great opportunity to win the election over the next few months by "doing good" and giving people an opportunity to see your peace, joy, love, etc... on display. You can put to silence the foolishness of men who do not know God and who do not understand how God equips you to live in the world; no matter who lives in the White House.

Please don't underestimate the influence you can have to the world around you.

God Bless,
Pastor Eric





STEPHEN MINISTRY UPDATE

Greetings from your Stephen Ministry Leaders!

We continue to have **eight Stephen Ministers ministering** to eight ladies in our faith community. Each week they meet for a time of encouragement, support and fellowship, and the reports from Care Receivers and Stephen Ministers reflects God's glory and each person being blessed.

We ultimately had only three people complete applications to undergo training to be new Stephen Ministers. Because of the role play and training requirements, we need at least six to have a successful training experience.

Our **Stephen Ministers and Leaders** will be individually **approaching people throughout December** to **consider completing an application to become a Care Giver** (aka Stephen Minister) through our Stephen Ministry.

If someone speaks to you, please **carefully, PRAYERFULLY** consider if this is God's call for you in ministry here at Buffalo Valley Church of the Brethren.

We hope to begin the 50 hours of training during January, completing this in May, at which time new Stephen Ministers will be commissioned.

If you are interested in talking more about Stephen Ministry, please contact either Alicia or Tracy.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!
Tracy Ericson & Alicia Showers
Stephen Leaders



Outside Our Walls

With Westernport Mission

Planning is already started for our summer mission trip to Westernport, MD. The date is set (**July 22 – 28, 2017**), the curriculum is ordered and now **we need YOU**. Please prayerfully consider joining the Westernport Team for Summer 2017. This past summer we had nearly 100 children who participated. This was a 50% increase over the year before. The reality is that we need many more volunteers to keep up with those numbers!

All summer Westernport missionaries are asked to fill out a survey at the end of the trip. Those surveys are compiled and the single most requested item was a **BIGGER TEAM**. This means **YOU!**

The Westernport Church of the Brethren needs us. They truly cannot do this on their own. They have a heart for these children but just do not have the manpower to staff a day camp. **WE DO**. We have the manpower, we have the time, and we have the resources!

Consider an excerpt from a letter that we received from Westernport after our July 2016 trip:

"Our church had a meager beginning with the day camp concept six years ago but, after three years, found ourselves without the human resources necessary to grow and nurture the program. It was truly God's Holy Spirit that sent you to us!"

Consider those words: 'God's Holy Spirit'. It is His Spirit that is calling us to be there to minister to these children and He wants us to be His hands and feet. What an honor! Please be in prayer. You are needed.

Brenda Eberhart



This Christmas may you rejoice in knowing you've received from Him, the greatest gift of all!!!



Do You Like Puzzles?

I like puzzles...at least those that are not too difficult to figure out. There are a lot of things that are puzzling in our world. I think that the Christmas story is a little puzzling. How was the birth of Jesus and His ministry discussed in the Old Testament? Why would Jesus be born to such a humble set of parents in such a humble part of the world? Why would King Herod kill all those children after the birth of Jesus and finally, how is the Christmas story full of hope?

In the month of December we are going to look at some of these pieces of the puzzle of the Christmas story. We are going to look at the historical piece, the humble piece, the hurtful piece and finally, the hopeful piece. It is our desire that by looking at these different aspects of Christmas we can help to put together the Christmas puzzle.

Join us for the Sundays of December as we piece together what God has for each of us.

God Bless,
Pastor Eric

P.S. Christmas day falls on a Sunday this year. We are planning to keep our regular Sunday morning schedule and we invite you to spend a part of Christmas morning with us.

Step and Sculpt Class

It is hard to believe I started this class over 15 years ago. This class has my same six faithful students, with a few more coming now and then. Over half of them attend our church. This class is a very fast pace class. Mondays we do step and ball with weights at the end. Thursday we alternate weekly two different step and sculpt classes.

Dan Hartman



Buffalo Gals

This month **Dresscember** participants will help spread awareness about a world issue by committing to the challenge of wearing dresses all month. One way you can support this worthy cause is by making a tax deductible contribution. See Sarah Kauffman for details.

Plan to join us Saturday, **December 10** from **9 am – 11 am**. We will gather at Buffalo Valley Church of the Brethren for our **Christmas Brunch & Secret Sister Reveal**. See Dani Sommers for additional details. Check our Women's Ministry bulletin board to sign up.

Mark your calendars for **May 6, 2017**. *ALL WOMEN* are invited to join us for our annual celebration. This year's theme is **Sisters in Christ Celebration!** Enjoy a meal and entertainment (courtesy of Men's Ministry) from 5 – 8 pm. More details to follow in the coming months.

As we enter this Advent season, may we keep our eyes fixed on the **reason we celebrate!**

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name **Jesus**, because he will save his people from their sins.

Matthew 1:21(NIV)

Tricia Dreese



Praise & Congratulations!

We praise the Lord for the following people who were accepted into membership on Sunday, October 30. Joining our congregation through affirmation of faith were, **Stacy Mast and Linda Miller**

Please show your support with a warm welcome to these new members of our congregation.



What's Cooking at Buffalo Valley

You will find DiAnne Beiler's **Peppermint Patties** recipe on page 168 of ***Come to the Table* cookbook!**

- ¾ C. - sweetened condensed milk
- 1 ½ tsp. - peppermint extract
- 4 C. - confectioners' sugar
- 3 C. - semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 2 tsp. - shortening

In a large mixing bowl, combine condensed milk and peppermint extract. Beat in enough confectioners' sugar, a little at a time, to form a stiff dough that is no longer sticky. Form into 1-inch balls; place on wax paper and flatten with fingers to form a patty. Let patties dry at room temperature for 2 hours; flipping once. In medium saucepan over low heat, melt chocolate chips with shortening, stirring often. Once melted, remove from heat. Dip patties, one at a time, into chocolate. Let cool on wax paper until set. Wrap as desired. For Christmas and holidays, add food coloring to milk and peppermint base.

This recipe will make about 30 peppermint patties. I used fat-free sweetened condensed milk when I made them. And, since I had dark chocolate coating wafers on hand, I used them instead of the semi-sweet chocolate chips. When you prepare this recipe, I would suggest you use a Kitchen Aid type mixer. I started out with my handheld mixer and that did not work well. The dough is very thick.

There are numerous candy recipes in ***Come to the Table* cookbook**, some of which would be great for the holidays! Cookbooks are available at the Welcome Center on Sunday mornings. The cost is \$10 each and they make great gifts.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



The Mystery Chef



Leading into the New Year

It is a blessing to have all the Ministry Team Leaders in place for 2017. As you pray, put these folks and those who serve the congregation in so many ways on the list.

MCT Chairperson	Steve Richard
Adult	Stephen White
Building & Grounds	William Baker
Children's	Teresa Chambers
Finance	James Brubaker
Hospitality & Communications	Jan Kline
Mission	Sarah Hockenbrocht
Spiritual Life Chair	Carol Pursel
Worship & Music	Nicole Walter
Youth & Young Adults	Kristy Heintzelman

Dale Lehman

2016 and 2017 Budget Correction

While finalizing the Pastoral Contracts for 2017, it was discovered that there was a mistake made in years of service credited to Pastor Donita. She was paid on scale for 8 years of service in 2015 and again on the 8 years scale for 2016. The intent was to pay her on scale for years of service which should have been 9 years. She would then be on 10 years of service for 2017.

The Ministry Coordinating Team (MCT) approved to pay Pastor Donita the difference (\$1,128) between step 8 and step 9 for 2016 and an additional \$135 to the pension fund.

For Budget year 2017, MCT also approved the difference between step 9 and step 10 (\$1,174) and the additional \$141 for the pension cost. The 2017 total budget figure for Associate Pastor for Children and Pastoral Care is \$58,362.

These actions will be on the agenda for the May Congregational Business Meeting for affirmation.

Jake Myer

The Lamplighter

Buffalo Valley Church of the Brethren
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Return Service Requested

The Lamplighter

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Donita J. Keister, Associate Pastor
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Eric M. Kauffman, Associate Pastor
for Youth & Young Adults

Editors – Jeff & Vicki Bastian
Church Office/Kitchen (570) 966-1183
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8:00 AM - Worship Service
9:00 AM - Fellowship Time
9:20 AM - Sunday school
10:30 AM - Worship Service



VOLUNTEERS

If you would like to see how Buffalo Valley Church of Brethren is patterning with parents to make disciples please join the Children's Ministry Team on Friday nights starting at 6 pm. **"We Love Volunteers"**

Teresa Chambers