

The Lamplighter

Buffalo Valley
Church of the Brethren

March 2025
Volume 41 No. 2



Join us for a relaxing weekend of
Faith, Fellowship, and Food!

March 14 - 16

Arrive: 5:00-6:00 pm Friday ~ Leave: 11:30 am Sunday

Mountain Dale Farm - McClure
Cost - \$75

Covers Lodging for both nights and Main Food for Meals:
Friday Dinner - Sunday Breakfast

Contact Zach Showers with any questions.
570-765-2011 or zshowers@yahoo.com
Sign-Up by March 2



March Sermon Topics

We continue with our Matthew series through the month of March. Since Matthew devotes more than 25% of his gospel to the last week of Jesus, we will be here a while. Here is the schedule:

March 2 nd :	Matthew 22:23-33
March 9 th :	Matthew 22:34-46
March 16 th :	Matthew 23:1-36
March 23 rd :	Matthew 24:1-44
March 30 th :	Matthew 25:1-13

God Bless,
Pastor Eric



What Is It?

EIGHT DAYS OF HOPE (EDOH) is a Christian, nonprofit organization that exists to love and serve those in need and will be the recipient of this year's auction proceeds. EDOH responds to US Natural disasters with a **Rapid Response Ministry**, **Mass Feeding Ministry** and a **Rebuilding Ministry**. Many of us are aware of their response in Tioga County PA following Hurricane Debbie last August. EDOH also has a **safe house ministry** for victims of **human trafficking**. To learn more you can go to [Our Impact - Eight Days of Hope](#)

Note that there are also opportunities for you to get personally involved as a volunteer with this organization. We hope that you will support the church auction and help us provide hope for those going through rough times.

We also value your input as to where auction funds might be utilized in the future so we encourage you to pray about it and be prepared to see how God leads.

Steve Richard



July 16 - 19

Applications for Assistance
are available at the
Welcome Center.

GRIEF SHARE Grief Support Group

13 Weekly sessions
March 4 - May 27
6:30 - 8:30 pm

at: Buffalo Valley Church of the Brethren

Questions:
Contact Jim Brubaker
570-713-4183
jnbru@dejazzd.com

Preregistration is suggested
call - 570-966-1183
email - churchoffice@bvcob.com

Are You Growing in Your Faith?

It's hard to believe that the Spring Quarter of Adult Sunday School is about to begin. Hopefully, that means warmer temperatures are coming soon, as well!

Heather Buttorff is leading a class based around **The Love Speaks Masterclass**, a Bible study from Right Now Media. Participants can expect to learn how to recognize God's voice in every circumstance of your life.

A class on **I & II Peter and Jude** led by Zach & Alicia Showers will focus on how we can apply lessons from these letters to our lives today. Themes will include suffering, living as exiles, false teaching, and perseverance, and more.

Pastor Eric will facilitate a class on **Race and the Bible**, which will include study and discussion of how ethnicity/race is discussed in the Bible and how we can properly understand and apply God's word in this area. Participants will be encouraged to share their questions and concerns related to this topic throughout the quarter.

Steve Richard will lead **Retiring Well**, exploring what the Bible says about retirement and if or how retirement fits into God's plan for our lives.

Finally, Laura Zimmerman and I are facilitating **Faith, Learning, and Listening**. We love listening to podcasts, but find that we do not usually have time to talk about them with others. So, each week we will choose a Christian podcast episode to listen to and discuss. If you enjoy podcasts or you want to start enjoying podcasts, this class might be for you!

All are welcome in our Adult Sunday School classes, even if you have never attended before!

Stacy Reitenbach,
Adult Sunday School Coordinator



Mission Trip to DR, February 11-20

Eleven of us bound for the Dominican Republic (DR) gathered at Buffalo Valley Church of the Brethren: Barbara Kelly, Ben Reimer, Cheryl Noll, Diane Reigle, Eric Reamer, Ethan Hoover, Jeff Bastian, Larry Showver, Richard Hughes, Rose Summers and Tom Styers. Five of us had never been to the DR: Ben, Cheryl, Richard, Larry and Rose. Kurt Ilgen drove the tightly packed van. We left at 4:30 am with good weather. On I-80 in New Jersey a sinkhole had stopped traffic, so we boarded the plane at Newark with only ten minutes to spare! We landed at the capitol, Santo Domingo, to 84 degrees and sunshine. The air was very dry for the duration and we drank a lot of water. There we met our hosts, Jewel "Renee" Reyes and her husband, Pastor David Reyes. Driving by bus out of sprawling Santo Domingo was an experience: a multilane highway jammed with cars and numerous scooters which weaved in and out between the cars with much honking. Ask us about DR drivers! Then we turned north and drove inland to Los Toros (the Bulls), the small city where we would stay.

Renee had arranged our accommodations: two houses for the men, and two for the women. Almost all houses in DR are cement block because of termites and have decorative wrought iron bars enclosing their front porches. Not to complain, but the men's quarters were dilapidated, with plumbing and electricity, but no running water. Water for cold bathing or flushing was from a barrel. The ladies stayed with host families. You don't drink tap water in the DR, but they kept us supplied with potable water. The church, the school and the houses were all within walking distance of one another, which made for many fun walks. The streets are constantly abuzz with pedestrians, noisy scooters, stray dogs, few cars, music and the occasional chicken.

We came to serve. The men spent most days at La Mayita, a poor pueblo 15 minutes from town. We rode in the back of a pickup for a lot of this. At La Mayita, we assisted a contractor with a big crew of men who spoke virtually no English building a long block wall to enclose the compound which is to become a community center. Goats and trash wandered around freely. We mostly shoveled, carried cement block or pushed wheelbarrows, and we got tired and dirty. The ladies helped some with this and did some painting, but mostly they served

at the school helping the children with crafts. The school is New Birth Christian School, and it has two campuses. The elementary grades are at the town campus; the Reyes' church is also there. The students displayed good order and team spirit at the volleyball court. Dominicans in general were nice and friendly. The other campus is for the high school, which is just outside town, surrounded by farm fields, with a postcard-perfect backdrop of mountains.

We ate many of our meals at one campus or the other. We were well-fed with tasty and nutritious food, including local stuff like plantains, yucca, cheese sandwiches and tropical fruits. Several times we ate at homes of friends or family of David and Renee. We also ate at a couple of restaurants. It wasn't all work and no play. We socialized most evenings. And we worshipped with the church. Some of the guys played many a game of cribbage using a pizza box as a table. One day pastor David gave us a tour of his 19-acre farm. We fed the sheep and he treated us to some fresh coconut and fruits. Another day was devoted to visiting Jason Hoover at his 10-acre syntropic farm, where we got an education on the method he teaches to local farmers. On that day we also went to a river where one brave soul swam! We later got a tour of a government run tree nursery. Praise the Lord, none of us got hurt, sick or lost.

Richard Hughes

March Young Adult Activities

Young Adults (18-30 yrs)

We continue to check in on an individual basis, to listen and share our journeys. I look forward to more in 2025!

We have a couple groups of young adults meeting. Megan Wetzel invites young adults to join her on **Sunday evenings, 6 pm**, at Cornerstone Fellowship with a larger group of young adults in the area for **Bible Study**.

Pastor K meets on the **first Wednesday of the month, 6 pm**, at Matty's Bar & Grill in Lewisburg for food, laughs, and challenging growth questions.

Pastor K



Looking to the Future

On the first full weekend in February the Ministries Coordinating Team (MCT) met Friday evening and Saturday morning for our annual retreat. The goals this year were to outline a process for the **transition of pastoral leadership** and to develop a process for resolving issues surrounding our **denominational affiliation**. We reviewed the current ministry areas of all our pastoral staff and felt we really are blessed with a great team. We noted how effective it has been to have Eric Kaufmann continue in a reduced role while Megan Wetzel has stepped up her involvement with youth and young adults. Between all our pastors we have a dedicated team making contact with all the generations that make up our faith community, from children to the elderly.

We know that our current staff are **approaching retirement** so we discussed what kind of pastoral model we see moving forward with the future replacement of Donita and Eric R. We felt the first step would be to call a Family Pastor who would take the full-time role of leading the Children and Youth/Young Adult ministries. This would necessarily involve either part-time or volunteer staff. Second would be the calling of a Lead Pastor to fulfill all the roles Eric currently provides. We envision a two-pastor full time team in the future.

We also discussed our denominational affiliation with the Church of the Brethren. The reasons for assessing this relationship now are tied to our pastoral transition plan. Now seems to be the time to consider our affiliation with a denomination that has moved away from our core values. This could impact individuals who would consider serving here as one of our pastors, so we would like to begin assessing the situation. We are at the very beginning of this process and we will be proposing forming a committee to further investigate our options to present to Church Council.

Overlaying the pastoral transitions with denominational questions led us to the following tentative timeline:

- 2025 May Council
Introduction to Denominational Affiliation
- 2025 Denominational Research
- 2025 Development of Congregational Profile
for Family Pastor search

2025 November Council – Decision
on changing Denominational Affiliation

2026 May Council – Begin
Search for Family Pastor

2027 Call Family Pastor - Donita Retire

2028 Profile for Lead Pastor & Pastoral search

2029 Call Lead Pastor - Eric Retire

This timeline could end up being compressed or stretched out and should not be considered fixed. The decisions of the Church Council will greatly impact how this unfolds. Please keep our faith community in your daily prayers as we address these issues.

Your brother in Christ,
Brian Keister, MCT Chairperson



Mission Ministry Spotlight

This month we want to highlight our support of Westernport Church of the Brethren. Each July for the past eleven years a group from Buffalo Valley has gone to **Westernport, MD** to support the church there by doing a weeklong Bible school for children in the neighborhood. This is a great time to spend time with members of your church family, young and old, while serving vulnerable and adorable children.

We need about 30 volunteers for this effort. Recruitment of volunteers is ongoing now as the trip comes up in mid-July, **Saturday, July 12 to Friday, July 18**. Please **see Vicki Bastian to get information and application** to volunteer this year. As I've said many times, I laugh more and cry more during this week than any other week of my life. Come see what the excitement is all about!

Pastor Eric

Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal.



Thomas V. Moore

From Your Lead Pastor,



Eating Rat Poison...

I was hoping that the title would get your attention! Have you heard the phrase, "Eating rat poison expecting the other person to die"? This phrase is often used to describe what happens when a person refuses to forgive. The one who refuses to forgive often does it to spite the unforgiven...but in reality the one who refuses to forgive is the one that is being hurt. He/she is really eating the rat poison.

This morning as I was reading the gospel of Matthew I read the section in Matthew 18 where Peter asks Jesus, "Lord, how often should I forgive my brother, seven times?" Jesus replies that Peter should forgive seven times seventy times. I want to exhort you to forgive, not for the benefit of the one you have forgiven but for your own benefit. The reality of forgiveness is that the greatest benefit is to the one forgiving, not the one forgiven.

Many times the one being forgiven might not even know he/she has been forgiven and might not even care. When we refuse to forgive we usually do this because we think the other person doesn't deserve it. That might be very true...but it is also irrelevant. After answering Peter's question Jesus goes on to tell the parable of the unforgiving servant. One servant was forgiven an incredible debt and then went out and refused to forgive someone a much smaller debt. We are intended to see that the one who was forgiven was not the kind of person who deserved to be forgiven, but he was forgiven anyway. However, in the parable that man's forgiveness was revoked by the king because of the man's refusal to forgive. That man was eating the rat poison himself and eventually it led to his own death.

The Holy Spirit enables you to forgive...every single time. Please obey. Please see the incredible benefit to your life by forgiving others. Stop eating the rat poison expecting someone else to die because you are killing yourself. When you forgive you eat cake...eat cake...Cake is good!

God Bless, Pastor Eric

The meaning of life. The wasted years of life. The poor choices of life. God answers the mess of life with one word: grace.

Max Lucado

BVCOB Youth & Young Adults:

PIT *"Together passionately pursue
& demonstrate the transforming life of Christ."*



Mental Health, Part II:

Being Streetlights to those who struggle.

(This Winter Sunday School Quarter, I facilitated a class called, "Streetlights: Equipping Church to support those facing Mental Illness and/or Addiction.")

Over the past 12 weeks our class has looked at mental illnesses like Major Depression, Schizophrenia, PTSD, Panic Attacks, and more. We have not only been stretched in understanding mental illnesses, but in empathy that more people struggle with mental health than we might think (1 in 5). We have learned repeatedly that one of the most effective ways to heal mental health and addiction is to have a safe place to talk about it, and have people who will journey with us. Sadly, it is rare to find safe places, and so people hide it and suffer on their own, often making the symptoms worse. It can feel like driving alone on a dark backcountry road without lights - lost and afraid that you took a wrong turn and are lost forever... and will probably be eaten by bears.

The church can be "Streetlights"; we can't take the steering wheel, but can let the person know they are not alone, and shine lights that help people along a scary path. Guidelines for "being Streetlights" fall into 4 categories (or Four Areas of Need):

1) Physical/medical support: Be willing to be with the person, and encourage them to seek professional help. We need to be careful not to add to the stigma that seeing a counselor is for "being crazy," but for being healthy.

2) Emotional Support: Spend regular time with the person, offering love and encouragement. Be willing to listen without trying to fix, but acknowledge the difficulty of what they are facing. Be careful not to see or treat them as "less than" or "broken" - they are strong, talented people, just like you who are facing a hard thing. And my favorite - do fun things with them (laugh, dance, sing, exercise, etc.)

3) Social Support: Be there. Check in regularly. Have a group of people share support, so the person doesn't feel like they are wearing one person out. Listen to them and respect what they

need; offer rides, babysitting, meals, assistance understanding and attending appointments, etc.

4) Spiritual Support: Offer to pray directly with them; pray for them. Gently and appropriately remind them that there is a bigger story - there is Hope; darkness will not last forever, we can make it through - and make sure that you offer to be with them through the darkness. Offer understanding and support, and be sensitive to what the person needs to be healthy - sometimes to be involved and with people, sometimes to be alone and quiet.

Obviously this is a lot. No one can do it alone for one person, not to mention 1 in 5 people. We need our community.

Imagine a community that checked in on each other and shared with each other regularly - "how is your mental health?" A community where we did not have to fear being judged because we were facing something difficult - physically, mentally, financially, or emotionally. But instead, we were treated with love and respect and offered a hand to walk through it - not a hand of pity because we have failed or are in need, but an understanding hand, knowing that we all face hard times and could use help. When Jesus healed, he was often not only healing a medical malady, but restoring a person to community ("go show yourself to the priest"). When Jesus promised that we would do greater things than he (John 14:12), maybe this is what he meant. There are many broken, lonely people around us, and among us. What healing could we assist by being lights on a dark road?

Peace, Pastor K

Church Email Lists

news@bvcob.com

BVCOB church news & events

prayer@bvcob.com

prayer requests

share-ads@bvcob.com

requests for help (moves, yardwork, rides, childcare, etc.), yard sales, items for sale, etc



Youth News

Upcoming Youth Events

March 2 - No Youth

March 9 - Youth 3 - 5 pm

- Lessons from Songs

March 16 - Planning

March 22 - Youth – Saturday

- Go kart racing from 1 to 6 pm

March 30 - No Youth

Go Kart Time - Youth and Young Adults are invited to go on **Saturday March 22 for Go Karts at K1 Speed in Harrisburg!** (Please note that those who are less than 58 inches tall will have to use a Youth Go Kart.)

We will be leaving the church by 1 pm and hopefully returning by 6 pm. The cost will be \$25. A pizza lunch will be provided after the racing. (If cost is an issue, youth need to let Pastor K know.) Youth are encouraged to bring a friend but you must sign them up! We ask that you only invite one friend initially so we have room for all our active youth. – We will notify you if/when additional friends can be invited! **All minors must have a completed waiver.**

Please let Stacy Mast or Pastor K know if you have any questions!

Stacy Mast, Youth & Young Adult Ministry Leader



CHURCH CALENDAR

Please remember that the calendar in The Lamplighter is only a copy from the church events calendar. For the complete view of the current official calendar including facility in use items visit the church website, www.bvcob.com.

Youth Retreat Revived - and so was I

As I write this article there are 13 youth (10 who are active in our church) attending a youth retreat outside of Mifflinburg. Pastor K and I were trying to remember the last time we had a youth retreat. We “think” it was 2019. After that COVID changed things, we didn’t have a core group who really wanted to go overnight, we could never find a “good” weekend that didn’t conflict with so many other events, etc. And it just stopped happening. But then God called Megan to help Pastor K fill the role with serving our youth. And the team of Pastor K and Megan revived the idea of the youth retreat!

As this is now my 6th year as the Youth & Young Adult Ministry (YaYA) team leader, I shared with MCT recently that I feel tired. So when I felt obligated to sign up for a spot to help at the retreat (because I am still the team leader) I was not feeling very excited. I teach special needs elementary students all week - which I love (Best Job in the World) but it can be tiring. And I have 3 of my own teenagers - who I love but it can be tiring. So spending my Friday evening at the youth retreat was going to be an obligation that I just had to do. Or so I thought. But it wasn’t. It was fun. And I was even sad that I didn’t plan to spend the whole weekend.

Lord, I thank you for Megan and Pastor K and the other adults who help on our team. I thank you for our youth who want to spend time in community so they can grow in their faith. I thank you for this church body who cares for our youth in countless ways but specifically in their support of Megan and Pastor K in their roles. And most of all, Lord, I thank you for how even when we don’t think we have much to offer, You have all that we need. Amen.

Stacy Mast,

Youth & Young Adult Ministry Team Leader



Camp Eder Corner

"Camp Eder seeks to offer a place where people can learn to know Jesus Christ through Bible based ministry in an outdoor environment".

Yes, it may be cold outside now, but it is time to register for June/July camps at Camp Eder. We have over ten campers already signed up for a great experience at Wet and Wild, Kids' Camp, Barefoot or Puddle Jumpers! Great times ahead!

Register online at campeder.org. If you are a regular attender at Buffalo Valley COB, \$280 of your full week's tuition will be paid by the church; (\$150 for barefoot camps). Let me know if you are going!

Week 1 June 15 - 20

- Senior High (Grades 9 - 12)
- Junior High (Grades 7 - 8)
- Rock Climbing (Grades 7 - 12)
- *New Wet and Wild (Grades 7 - 12)
- Shining Stars (Ages 15+special needs)

Week 2 June 22 - June 27

- Wet and Wild (Grades 7 - 12)
- Junior Camp 1 (Grades 4 - 6)
- Outback Camp (Grades 4 - 6)
- Horse Camp (Grades 4 -6)

Week 3 July 6 - 11

- Kids Camp 1 (Grades 1 - 3)
- Camp All Out (Grades 1 - 3)
- Barefoot (July 9 - 11 for Kindergarten & 1st)
- Junior Camp 2 (Grades 4 - 6)

Week 4 July 13 - 18

- Dream It, Build It (Grades 4 - 6)
- Culinary Camp (Grades 4 - 6)
- Puddle Jumpers (Grades 4 - 6)
- Kids Camp 2 (Grades 1 - 3)

Week 5 July 20 - 25

- AT Trekkers (Grades 7-12)
 - C&O Biking Trip* (Grades 7 - 12)
- (*note this camp is physically challenging)

Any questions, contact Fay Richard,
BVCOB Camp Rep at 570-716-2442



Operation Christmas Child

According to Operation Christmas Child (OCC), in 2024, there were 11,927,439 shoeboxes packed from 11 countries. As a result of the shoeboxes, 5.5 million children participated in the Greatest Journey and 3.2 million made the decision to give their lives to Christ. All these wonderful numbers happen because of a "little" shoebox.

This year at Buffalo Valley Church of the Brethren we are praying to reach a goal of sending 400 shoeboxes once again. We encourage you to participate in any way you can! Take a look at the board in the Main Entry to see an updated list of what is needed. The Amazon Wishlist is up and ready! You will see a QR code on the board. If you scan that with your phone, it will take you right to the list! If you have any questions, please contact Kelsey Zimmerman.

Kelsey Zimmerman

LOOKING AHEAD IN 2025

April 12 – Easter Egg Fair

April 17 – Love Feast

May 4 – Church Council Meeting

June 7 – Strawberry Festival

June 18 – Day Camp Beginnings

July 2 – 6 – COB Annual Conference

July 12 – 18 – Westernport Mission Trip

July 16 – 19 – Sun Area Work & Witness

September 19 – 20 – COB District Conference

October 5 – Love Feast

November 2 – Church Council Meeting

November 29 – Kettle Cook

The Lamplighter

Buffalo Valley Church of the Brethren
46 Brethren Church Rd
Mifflinburg PA 17844

Return Service Requested

The Lamplighter

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Lead Pastor – Rev. Eric S. Reamer
(570) 837-9393

Donita J. Keister, Associate Pastor
for Children & Pastoral Care

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

Editors – Jeff & Vicki Bastian
Church Office/Kitchen (570) 966-1183
churchoffice@bvcob.com

8:30 AM - Sunday school
9:45 AM - Worship Service