



Beverly Heights
Presbyterian
Church

scattered seeds.

THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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The Nate Devlin I Know

By the saints of Beverly Heights



Pastor Devlin holds Mae Louise Webster on her baptismal day,
November 10, 2019, with mom Cara, father Ben and brother Charlie.

Please turn to page 16 to read Ben's story.

Senior Pastor Nate Devlin resigned after the worship service on October 15, 2023. For nearly 20 years, he has been our shepherd, friend, confidant and mentor. In this edition, we remember the many ways the Lord has used him in his ministry here. While his departure is a significant loss to our community of faith, we remain confident in God's sovereignty over his future – and ours. We hope to have our pastor restored to us soon.

'Back of the house leadership'

By Jen Tan

In 1970, Robert Greenleaf coined the term "Servant Leadership."

The website of the Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership offers this definition for the term:

A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the "top of the pyramid," servant leadership is different. The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible.

While my 18 years of friendship with Nate gives me a privileged insight into many facets of his character, my appreciation of him as an embodiment of a servant leader has been solidified these past five, while serving here at the church.

The Nate I know shows up early and stays late to each of the Symposium (formerly New Century) dinners we've hosted. During each one, he has cheerfully performed the myriad menial tasks that such occasions demand, modeling the high-level work ethic that is necessary in a busy kitchen.

The Nate I know, when informed that many of my former Wednesday Night Heights helpers were no longer available, offered to help peel potatoes (this, despite his weird rejection of them as a delicious food option!).

The Nate I know arrives at the Tan's annual Chinese New Year party many hours before the guests do, to chop vegetables, fold dumplings, and fry the mountains of panko

shrimp that always make an appearance.

In restaurant parlance, the term "back of the house" is used to describe the part of the restaurant the customers don't see. Beverly Heights Church is far from a restaurant, and our people are far from customers, but the metaphor still stands in my mind.

The Nate I know always rolls up his sleeves, dons an apron, and leads ... from the back of the house.



Nate at work ... cooking

‘He cares about your soul’

By Elder Chad Winkler

Pastor Nate mirrors the fortitude and tenacity of other leaders amidst tumultuous times, reminiscent of great leaders of the past. As I reflect upon his service, I’m reminded of the indomitable spirit of Sir Winston Churchill, who once remarked, “Success is not final, failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts.” Such is the spirit of Pastor Nate.

For half a decade, our congregation has been led by Pastor Nate. His sermons, like Churchill’s speeches, are beacons of truth, hope and light in times of incredible strife, exuding an unwavering strength and conviction. But Nate’s intense dedication to his flock goes beyond the pulpit. He is a confidant, a friend, and a pillar of trustworthiness.

His leadership style resonates with authenticity. Like Churchill, Nate does not mince words nor cower behind niceties. He doesn’t care about your money or your status; he cares about your soul. He is forthright, empathetic and deeply connected to the spiritual and emotional well-being of his congregation. I’ve turned to him in his office many times, in my own moments of doubt and turmoil. I’ve found solace in his wisdom and guidance. Even if just

temporarily, I will miss that.

Yet, even the most robust leaders face adversity. It is with a broken heart that I reflect upon his recent resignation. Much like the dark days Churchill faced, Nate’s exit was marred by unjust pressures from the presbytery and a process that lacked honor, fairness and dignity. Not only did Beverly Heights lose a great pastor; the presbytery helped push him out the door in the name of “help.”

Adversity does have a way of revealing true character, however, just as Churchill once said, “If you’re going through hell, keep going.” I have no doubt that Nate will persevere through this trial. I know him too well to think he will second guess his decisions and give up on the direction the Lord has for him and the congregation he has been ordained by God to lead. That’s certainly not the Pastor Nate I know.

His impact on me and my family has been nothing short of monumental. His departure is a significant loss, but his legacy of leadership, friendship and unwavering faith will be forever in our hearts.



A real man’s place is in the kitchen: cooks Nate, Kevin Tan and Chad in ours.



*Missions Celebration honoring
Carl and Pat Templin in 2019*



*Zhang family baptism
in 2022*

*Nate with mentor and predecessor
Pastor Emeritus Rick Wolling,
along with Elder Joe Williams*



Nate hugging his buddy, Marilyn Meek

‘Showing up when life happens’

By Elder Dave Webb



Moving furniture in August 2019 for PRISM, on the final run of Nate’s old Toyota truck – it quit that very day!

The Nate Devlin I know shows up when life happens.

I was admitted to St. Clair Hospital on September 7 with stroke like symptoms.

As the day wore on, it became apparent any immediate threat to my health from the episode had likely passed. The experience shifted to more of a fact-finding mission to ascertain the cause of the episode. September 7 was also the first day of choir practice at Beverly Heights Church. As such, I encouraged Connie to attend choir practice as is her routine on Thursday nights, more or less, for decades.

Upon sharing the events of our day with Nate, Connie shot me a text that was essentially, “Nate said he’s coming.”

I chuckled as I read the text because the end of visiting hours at St. Clair, much to my surprise, was announced quite loudly and authoritatively over the public address system for

all to hear promptly at 9 pm.

As I’m a rule follower by nature, I was thinking, too bad Nate’s headed here after a long day, only to be turned away. Well, about 25 minutes or so later, into my room walked Nate (and Elder Todd Loizes).

Nate assured me he knew the look to give to get in after hours, but didn’t need it! After a period of conversation around how I was feeling and the details of all that had transpired that day, Nate closed our brief but significant time together in prayer.

Immediately, a sense of peace came over me. I was prepared for a terrible night of sleep, and simply hoping for a quick discharge Friday morning after all the test results were back, and read by the appropriate doctor.

Instead, I had what can be described as a peaceful night.

‘You’ve got to step off the boat’

Hey Nate,

I’ve been thinking a lot about you and the situation we as a congregation find ourselves in. I know I’m not alone in feeling helpless. My hope rests in Romans 8:28 and as I read the Bible, focusing on Romans, the latter part of chapter 1 continues to make me think about the dividers, who I believe are at this point bullies at the least and leaning towards if not already at the level of persecutors.

This has become insanely personal and quite honestly, I’m disgusted. I have to check myself daily from taking things into my own hands by calling these folks and giving them a piece of my mind, but I think of the soldier’s cut ear as Jesus was arrested and what He said to Simon Peter. He’s got this! It sure doesn’t make it any less painful as we wait, but in Him I trust. With that said, one thing I can do is try to encourage. I want you to know how God used you to strengthen me as a Christian and bring me back into the light.

It’s been almost 11 years since the day we met at Armstrong’s in Castle Shannon. I can’t remember how you ended up there instead of Rick, but I’m thankful it was you. I sat weeping and weeping from the shame I felt from falling away from Christ, trying to fill the void in my heart with earthly wants. The waitress came to the table no fewer than five times before we were ready to order and you so calmly and politely, each time, told her we needed more time before we ordered.

You were never uncomfortable, you never made me feel uncomfortable and you were able to take all that I was saying in between sobbing, with the presence of a pastor. This was THE turning point in my walk with Christ as an adult. It hasn’t been all rainbows and butterflies, but you also let me know that it wasn’t going to be at the end of our conversation. There are two things I remember vividly that you said to me.

“Brad, it sounds to me like you have a decision to make. You’ve got to take a step off the boat!” Then, at the end as we were walking out, “It’s not going to get any easier!” You said this last statement with a chuckle. I chuckled as well,



but knew I didn’t yet know what you meant. That didn’t scare me though. There was a courage I walked out of that lunch with and God used you personally to minister to me in a way I’ve never been ministered to before that point.

Thank you for being obedient to the call of Christ in a way that allowed you to be at that Armstrong’s table with me; to patiently wait as I cried, and listen and be able to so profoundly put into words what needed to happen next. One of Dr. Charles Stanley’s quotations that always sticks with me is, “Obey God and leave all the consequences to Him.” That makes me think of your “it doesn’t get any easier” statement! It doesn’t get easier, but the pain that comes from obedience allows God to form us closer to the likeness of His Son.

He has a plan for you. I know you know that – I mean you’re the preacher! :) But I’m wildly confident of this and pray that that plan is for you [to return] as pastor of Beverly Heights. If it’s not, He has something greater in store for you. I hope that you can find peace and strength in resting in the power of the Holy Spirit and that you get encouragement sprinkled in when you need it most. I’m praying for that and for you my dear brother.

May God bless you, Brad Brentin

‘Best boss I’ve ever had’

By Kate Kuzko



Pastor Nate speaking with Mike Pierson (episode 12 of 116) in The Scattered Seeds Podcast, which has had 43,000 downloads/ listens since its inception in 70 countries around the globe.

I’ve been working as an independent contractor in the media world for over a decade. In that time, I’ve worked with a wide array of personalities. The micromanagers, the clueless bosses and the ones who, no matter how much you prove yourself, would never respect a younger woman working in the tech field.

Many of the current issues in our church stem from what kind of boss Nate is. As someone who has worked with Nate for years, I can say with confidence that he’s the best boss I’ve ever had.

Over four years ago Nate, and Tom O’Boyle, took a chance on me to produce their podcasts. At first, I could tell Nate was still sizing me up. Not so much on the skill side of things, but he hadn’t known me long enough to ascertain my character. I hadn’t been back in the sphere of Beverly Heights for long.

The first time Nate and I sat down to speak was at a lunch Tom arranged to discuss how to make the podcast happen. All he had to go on at that point were reports from people who had known me as a child, one of whom was Tom.

But he still took the chance.

Since then, we’ve recorded more than 100 episodes. That’s about 300 hours of listening on my part in person while I recorded the conversations. And then on top of that, another 5,000 or so hours of working with those recorded conversations to get them ready for release.

You learn a lot about a person when you sit and listen to him in a conversational setting. Sermons are polished, and the podcasts are polished when I release them out into the ether. But the recording sessions are not. They are honest reactions, interactions, mistakes and jokes, stumbles and stutters.

I was told early on that Nate holds his cards close to his vest. To continue the analogy, even the best player has “tells,” that you can pick up on when you’ve watched and listened long enough. I’ve learned to listen for the vocal tells, the moments of hesitation or excitement that show which direction Nate’s likely to take something.

Nate comes from a hard-working background. He wants to see people doing what they were made to do, and to grow into their roles. And he’s very good at seeing when a task or a role isn’t a good fit, and better at letting people thrive when it is.

There have been times when doing my job was a challenge because of outside factors. Each time he would sit me down and help me work through what was going on so I could get back to where I needed to be.

Above that, Nate has a good heart. I had the privilege of tutoring Nate’s eldest daughter Hannah as she took her final math class in preparation for college. And through that, the privilege of interacting with the Devlin family in their home. And what I can conclude is this: Nate loves and serves the Lord.

Nate is a good father to his children. A good husband to his wife Holly. A good friend to those who love him dearly. And he has been the best boss I have ever had.

'I love his heart'

By Laurita Kuzko



For as long as anyone can remember, Pastor Nate has been leading the worship band during our Vacation Bible School weeks, including on this occasion in 2021.

More than a few people have told me that my plate is full. I will add that it's old, chipped and has some cracks too. In the past few years my immediate family has faced more than one near-to-death illness, half a dozen hospitalizations, several new diagnoses (most are chronic and degenerative), and a lot of medicine changes that have caused more issues. And I lost my mom.

It's been a difficult season for everyone. It's been nonstop for me. So, I've had lots of opportunities and been privileged to get to know my dear pastor Nate.

When you're struggling to handle the storms, sometimes you need help to lift the burdens. We should be that for each other. Nate has the gift of coming alongside and letting you know he is there for you. What I have come to expect and depend on is his ability to get my focus off myself and point it back to Jesus.

I needed to hear messages that got my heart right with God. I needed to face my stubborn pride and at times self-pity,

and even despair, and repent. Messages that got me to turn and get back up, take up my cross and begin again to walk out my faith. I got that from Nate's pulpit. Good job Pastor Nate. And thank you.

Nate has an open-door policy. I took him up on that many times. I asked lots of questions and I like talking about scripture. We were able to agree on the essentials, and respect each other in our differences in the few non-essentials.

It's in these conversations that Nate earned my trust. His knowledge of the Word of God is amazing. His wit is a bonus.

But what I love most about Nate is his heart. Nate has a love for the Lord that is strong and true. It's that central core integrity of his faith that is the most important thing about Nate. He lives his life to please the Lord first and foremost, and that is why I love my pastor, my brother, my friend, Nate.

‘Is everything okay?’

By Louise O’Boyle



Children’s choir rehearsal in 2021

Nate Devlin. My pastor for five years and my associate pastor for another 12 years before. I know him well. And, I always get the odd feeling he knows me well, too!! Maybe too well?

You see, Nate is perceptive. He has emotional intelligence. He gets people. He loves them and he is able to see the cracks in their mortar. He may explain how he sees your talents and passions for Christ while he brings attention to another area that could use repointing.

Sometimes, I have taken his quips hard, but upon introspection, I have always come away seeing Nate’s perspective and at the same time, the Lord’s bidding, delivered in a kind or funny way. As one of his sheep, I realize that in joining Beverly Heights, I have signed up for his shepherding. I have learned to consider what he says and force myself to lower the defenses that obstruct my spiritual growth.

One example is how he loved on the Websters when Amos was born at 20 weeks and died. I was in the church talking on the phone to my daughter Cara on the B-level. Nate was turning off lights in the building before leaving on a Friday afternoon. When I hung up, he turned around from the stairway leading home and asked if everything was OK.

I said no, but I couldn’t talk about it. I didn’t have Cara and Ben’s permission. Then Nate – associate pastor at that time, who knew about the pregnancy and could see my distress – took time to explain that he was our shepherd. Helping us and praying for us was his life’s passion and God had ordained this moment. So, I shared with him the difficulties of Cara’s pregnancy and the worry that the baby wasn’t healthy. We prayed.

Cara delivered Amos and he died in her arms late on Saturday. When Nate learned of Amos’s passing on Sunday morning, he called Cara and Ben at the hospital to pray with them and give them comfort even though he was preaching that morning. And then he prepared a memorial service to give thanks for the blessing of Amos and to help our family grieve.

That’s a pastor who loves his sheep. One who through the Holy Spirit, plants himself in the middle of a hard situation loving and helping his people.

Nate loves children.

I know from the Bible that Jesus loves children. I imagine that God sees children as His best creation. It’s one of the reasons I have taught preschool in the basement for almost 30 years! I love children too. But, to see in the senior pastor a man who wants to hug and love each and every child who comes into the church – that’s amazing. I have never seen that before in any senior pastor where I have attended church. I also think it’s lovely to see how much he loves and is involved in the lives of his own children!!!

Not only does Nate love kids; he gets them. He knows that discipline is love. He knows how to talk to them. How to laugh with them. How to enjoy them so that they feel the love of our Lord and Savior. What a gift! What a pastor.

On his last Sunday in church, Nate thanked the congregation for how we have “loved [him], loved my family, given to us in abundance and showered us with opportunity. I am grateful.” Let me say, I am grateful to God for giving us Nate for our pastor all of these years. May he return soon.

‘How to be a shepherd’

By Peter Chace



Not twins; brothers from the same Father

The Scripture passage that speaks most profoundly to me in my training toward pastoral ministry is John 21, where Jesus interacts with the disciples after His resurrection. In particular, He restores Peter who has denied Him three times.

Three times Christ asks Peter “do you love me?” and three times Peter answers affirmatively. Jesus responds in succession that Peter should therefore, “feed my lambs,” “tend my sheep,” and “feed my sheep” (John 21:15-17).

The job of a pastor is multifaceted. It requires wise governance (1 Tim 3:1-5); the ability to teach and preach (1 Tim 5:17; Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28, Jam 3:1); the necessity to

correct errors (Titus 1:6-9; 2 Tim 3:16); and the humble care of God’s flock (1 Pet 5:1-5, Jer 3:15).

Over the years in campus ministry and church ministry, I have learned that dealing with people’s hearts is a complex mixture of knowledge, discernment, wisdom and instinct. Some things can be taught, but some things God simply must give to the shepherd.

Nate is my shepherd. He is my pastor. He teaches me God’s Word. Each week I watch him wrestle with the text – or rather, be wrestled by the text – in order to bring forth all that he can from God’s Word rather than his own thoughts.

Nate is a pastor who helps me be a better husband. I have spent many hours discussing family life with Nate and being challenged by him to be a more loving, understanding, caring and sacrificial Christian man in order to love Sarah like Christ loves the Church (Eph 5:25).

Nate is a pastor who helps me be a better father. Nate regularly encourages, teaches and exhorts me to raise, teach, love and discipline my children according to Scripture that our home would be loving and well managed (Eph 6:4, 1 Tim 3:4).

Nate is a pastor who helps me be a better man. He has shown his commitment to me and my family from the moment I first came to him in 2019. When he makes a mistake, he owns it and asks for forgiveness. When he makes a commitment, he keeps it. These two qualities are rare, even among pastors today.

In short, I would not be here without Pastor Nate, and I don’t see myself here without him. I see in Nate the qualities of a shepherd whom God has given good gifts. He has taught me many things, but most of all he is teaching me how to love Jesus and His Church, more than I previously thought possible.

He is teaching me how to be a shepherd.



Easter Sunday service amid Covid, 2020



*Christmas Eve service
in 2021*



One of six outdoor Sunday services in 2020



‘Speaking God’s truth’



To the Administrative Commissioners,

I have been a parishioner at Beverly Heights Presbyterian Church since 2019 and this church has been such a blessing to myself and family. I am so saddened by the loss of Pastor Nate to this congregation and wanted to give voice to what a positive impact he has made on us.

To give some of my background, I was raised in the Catholic Church and after my son began attending preschool at Beverly Heights in 2018, I became interested in attending services there. It was my first experience in a Presbyterian church.

I was immediately struck by the welcoming atmosphere, starting at the very beginning of the service to pause and greet our fellow parishioners. People took the time to learn your name and over time you got the feeling that your presence or lack of presence was noticed. I had never seen this before and I truly began to learn what fellowship meant in this church.

Pastor Nate’s sermons were also new to me in that I could relate and apply his teachings so readily to my own life. I saw in him a leader who didn’t put himself on a pedestal but rightly placed Christ there. I learned the importance of

having a personal relationship with God, truly following His word, and living out his Word in our community through his sermons.

I have also participated in wonderful women’s bible studies there and my daughter has been a part of the Wednesday Night Heights program as a member of the children’s choir. The value of music as a form of worship is undeniable in this place. Before coming to Beverly Heights, I had little appreciation for worship music in any form and now I consider it one of my favorite aspects of the services.

This congregation under Pastor Nate’s direction has been life changing for me spiritually. I continue to grow in my walk with the Lord through words spoken in this church that have guided me in the importance of relying on His promises, speaking God’s truth, and not conforming to the ways of this world. Our community needs churches like Beverly Heights exemplifying what it means to further the Kingdom of God.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Andria Glock

Short takes



Pastor Nate, his wife Holly and children Abby, Nathan and Hannah, who was born the month before they first arrived at Beverly Heights in February 2004.

My most vivid memory of Pastor Nate is when he came to the hospital to visit and pray for me on August 6, 2019, the day I was diagnosed with stage 4 metastatic breast cancer. This demonstrates his care for his church family.

Sue Burditt

Dear Pastor Nate,

As a recent and regular congregant but non-official member (as of yet), I support you. I came to BH after doing a bit of research in an attempt to find a Bible-based Presbyterian church and so far BH has more than delivered. I can't pretend to untangle the Gordian Knot that has led up to the situation you outline [in your resignation letter] and which is reflected in the attached PDF. But I do believe you are a wonderful and chosen leader for this congregation. Without your leadership, I will regretfully be looking for another church in which to workshop. You have a rare gift. I believe you to be not only well-grounded in scripture but inspired, effective and powerful. I wish you the best.

With much respect and dare I say love,

Loren Smith

Dear Nate,

First (and if you wish on a difficult day, ONLY), I love and respect you and Holly, and I am so saddened that things have come to this. I could hardly enjoy my three grandsons this morning before they left for their new home in Warren, Pa., because I was so distracted and grieved. Let me repeat: I love and respect you, and that is probably plenty for now. ...

God has kept Dianne and me through 45 years, and through some trials (cancer for both of us, and the death of our first beauty, little Marian Ruth), so I know in my mind that He can preserve you and Holly also. But I have no peace; it is almost easier to experience hardship oneself – aided by God's invisible grace – than it is to observe those whom you love and respect experience hardship. I probably won't sleep tonight, as I grieve for you, Holly, and Beverly Heights.

That God would bless and preserve you, Holly, and the children, and one day cheer you, is the prayer of

Yours imperfectly in Christ,

T. David Gordon



Emma Campagna, with Nate, at the Advent Family event in 2021

Coda

On Oct 10, 2023, at 11:45 AM, Ben Webster wrote:

Hi Brother,

I am so sorry it has come to this. I just want you to know that you have made a deep impact both on my faith journey and me as a friend.

Coming to Beverly Heights in my situation, as O'Boyle adjacent, felt more like a curse than a gift at first. It was a duty – I felt like I had to. And man, that first Sunday in July [2012] in the Social Room was rough. The Sanctuary was undergoing renovations and it was a million degrees in the Social Room and a young associate pastor was preaching. Forty-five minutes into the sermon and I was seriously reconsidering marrying into the O'Boyle family.

Fast forward 11 years and that young associate pastor is now a senior pastor and I am no longer wondering what I am doing at a church like Beverly Heights, but rather crying about what has befallen our beloved senior pastor. You have given me the gift of salvation as a true follower (now) of Christ when before I just thought of myself as Christian. Your sermons are beautiful discourses on Christ's love for us in a broken world. What has happened to you is a travesty and I hope that you will soon regain the pulpit you so richly deserve.

I'll be praying for you, brother, and I hope I will see and listen to you preach again.

In Christ's Love,

Ben

On Oct 10, 2023, at 1:26 PM, Nate wrote back:

Hi Ben,

Thank you so much for sharing this. I remember those sweltering days in the Social Room too! It really is a miracle that you ever came back. But you did, and it was obviously the Lord who was drawing you.

I remember when you started coming to the Pathways Young Adult Bible Study I led all those years ago when you were dating Cara and we studied the Gospel Centered Life. I remember being with you at the men's retreat with Tunch Ilkin, and how uncomfortable you were then sharing your faith. And I remember the pain you shared with me over lunch downtown after Amos passed, but how you were growing in your faith and trust in the Lord through hard times. And I look at you now and your role as husband and father to your three kids and I marvel at how God has blessed you and made you and Cara a model of Christian parenting in our church.

I look at you now and I see a man of God and it makes my heart sing. I'm humbled that I've been able to walk with you all these years and to play a small part in your Christian formation. I remain hopeful that I will be able to continue to serve you in the years to come.

With love,

Nate