

The Pastor's Notebook

I have a wonderful dentist. Linda and I have been going to him for 20 years and we're more than satisfied with his care. I've married some in his family and buried others, and he and I share a love of all things baseball.

Recently, at my semi-annual check-up, my dentist uttered these infamous words, "It really is all about the plaque." And with that I received a lesson on the importance and problems of dental plaque, that sticky substance that collects on teeth, invisible at first but eventually leaving its mark and impact all over.

During his lesson in "plaque-ology" I began to consider the similarities between plaque with sin.

Like sin, plaque starts as a thin, invisible film, accumulates in cracks and occlusions, and clings to any surface. We barely detect the build-up, and yet it leads to pain and decay.

As I sat in the chair, tilting my head back and exposing my sensitive gums and enamel to an array of delicate tools, the truth rushed into my mind – unless I'm careful, I can become diseased without even knowing it's happening, whether by plaque or sin.

And so I, and we, need to "lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely."

Because sin, like plaque, may be clinging more closely than we know. Sin may have found cracks and pores in which to settle. It may have built up so slowly that we never even realized we were carrying around such a burden. And it may have initiated a barely-detectable process of decay that we can only reverse with some pain, much precision and cost.

Today, we can make a preventative appointment with our "divine dentist." Don't worry, he'll be gentle, careful, and tender if we open ourselves to him. Like my dentist he won't sugar-coat the truth about our situation at all, but he can be trusted. He'll

challenge us about our lack of attention to this serious issue, but always with love. He's seen what happens when we fail to scrub away sins like pride, greed, apathy, idolatry, unrighteous anger, jealousy and a lack of compassion for others and he wants, more than anything, to heal us.

Is it time for a check-up? God bless you, always.

- Pastor Tom

Reach for Something More!

Have you ever heard Tony Campolo speak? If so, you know he's powerful yet funny, challenging yet caring. We'll spend a little time with Tony during July as he helps us build a faith and life that really matters.

Together we will be challenged to discover how to experience a revitalized faith and life, making the most of each day. Get ready to "Seize the Day," and discover what God has in store for us all!
Beginning July 6 at 7 pm Everyone is welcome.

Summer Sunday Worship Schedule

Remember to worship together this summer!!

Now through September 3 we worship at 10 a.m. each week.

FaithLink Adult Study gathers at 9:00 a.m.

Kid's Sunday School begins July 9 in the Outdoor Playground

For those of you who like to get an early start on your day we will also enjoy **OUTDOOR worship at 9 a.m.** in the Hillside Worship Center.

We love (and always need) Volunteers!

We're always in need of a variety of volunteer helpers around the church. If you're interested in serving as a **Liturgist, Greeter, Coffee Host, Counter, Nursery, Acolyte, Altar Guild or Prayer List Partner**, contact Melissa Zelinsky or Gloria Stephan.



We have an online tool called Ministry Scheduler Pro at First Bethel to schedule volunteers for several ministries. You can access everything online and there's even an app! You can enter dates when you're unavailable to serve, request subs, and view the published schedules any time.

If you'd rather have a root canal than use a computer don't worry! Just call the office and we will take your information and do it for you! We always need substitutes, too, so even if you don't want to be on the "regular schedule," we could use your help. Call 412-722-8316 for more information!

The Log in Our Own Eye

It won't be long before our young people will be heading back to college, so here's a bit of guidance in an amusing little story:

A young man from Scotland went to study at an English university. A month into the school year, his mother visited and asked how he liked living in the dorm. "It's awful!" he exclaimed. "The fellow in the room next door bangs his head on the wall constantly, and the one on the other side screams all day."

"How do you stand it?" his mother asked in amazement.

"Oh, I ignore them," her son replied. "I just sit here quietly, playing my bagpipes."

Did you miss the presentation about our outdoor classroom?



Do you have some questions?

If you do please ask Lynda, Charlene

or call KSK At 412-835-6141.



First Bethel needs an outdoor space for VBS and Sunday School.

The early childhood learning center needs the same.



Please help First Bethel continue with it's great legacy of supporting young people!

Step to the back of the narthex, pick up your foot AND STEP INTO THE NEXT 50 YEARS!

No member of our family should be satisfied if any member of our American family is suffering or in need and we can do something about it.

- General Colin Powell

A Report from the Mission Field

Imagine sitting in a 15 passenger van out on a dirt road out in the middle of nowhere. We start our ascent and go around a corner and as a van saying "oh, no." We have come across our first challenge getting up the side of a mountain with a road that has been washed away many times, the ruts are knee deep. We have been told keep the van moving forward or you won't get up the first section. (Now imagine going up this road with 4 boisterous, enthusiastic boys!) We finally make that first section and have to park, gather all we can carry and start the quarter mile walk to Miss Bea's house (her driveway was impassible without 4 wheel drive). Once we arrive at our site, we are greeted by a gracious and loving Miss Bea. She opened her house to all 14 of us, sat with us, shared stories with us, drove some of us back and forth to the vans and danced on her newly built back porch. She and her husband, Ricky who jumped in and helped with the construction, were so appreciative of the work that was started on their home, it was also changing their discouraged outlook on life. To be apart of all that occurred during this week is in-explainable. To see the the youth come together (some who only knew a few) to work together and then want to hang out all together (even pulling in others into their group for a huge game of Church on Fire) was so heartwarming. There are so many stories I could share, if you want to hear more, just find me! If this is something that you have thought about doing, I would strongly encourage you to try it (it is only a week) you will definitely come away with a God moment all your own. As the saying goes, if I can do it, you can do it and I am so, so glad I did!

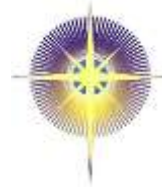


CHRIST AT HEART

Thank you for all your support and the opportunity to represent First Bethel.

Robin Gray
Team: Ya Boyd 2

Christmas in July!



Yep – you read that correctly!

The Outreach Committee will be sponsoring a Christmas in July event to benefit the TNC (The Nyadire Connection). We will have the **Angel Tree** set up in the Fellowship area so please take a look at the angels while you grab that cup of coffee and cookie. The tree will be set up from July 9 to July 30.

We are working on having **tables of crafts** made by the people of Nyadire available for purchase some Sundays in July. When that information becomes available we will put it into the church bulletin.

Lastly on July 16 we will be having a **guest speaker, Drew Harvey**, to tell us more about TNC and to let us know how we can help to support this great mission project. You will not want to miss this! Watch the church bulletin for more information!

A Celebration of Gifts!

God has given us all special gifts. Can you sing or play an instrument? Have you always wanted to try comedy or do you juggle? Please join us for a casual "open mic night" in Founders Hall. Artists & authors who would like to display their work and bakers who can help provided snacks are also welcome! This

celebration is open to all ages. Anyone with a gift that they would like to share is encouraged to participate. Last year, participants sang or played instruments, and one demonstrated some very impressive karate moves. **Please contact**



Brenda Sullivan @ 412-894-5583 if you are interested in participating. We may even spark some discussion about how we can use our gifts in other ways?



Love in Action

“Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.” (1 John 3:18)

The 2017 ASP mission team traveled to Boyd County Kentucky the week of June 18th. Their construction projects included repairing a roof, building a porch, installing underpinning and building outdoor steps. As always, many relationships were strengthened and many lives were touched.



Our volunteers were Jaime, James, Shane, Corey, Lisa M, Robin, Donna, Madison, Wil, Kadin, Claire, Regan, Casey, Lacey, Maggie, Lisa D, Gloria, Jessica, Phil and Samantha.

We're already talking about next year!

Meadowcrest Nursing Center Ministry

Bring the good news of Jesus to our neighbors at Meadowcrest on Braun Road in Bethel Park!

Our next two visits for worship and singing will be July 7 and August 4 at 3:00 pm. Join us for a meaningful time with our neighbors. No experience necessary, just a caring heart and a willing spirit! See Pastor Tom today!

“If you want to make a difference, the next time you see someone being cruel to another human being, take it personally. Take it personally because it IS personal.”

- Mavis Leno

Remember the SHIM Food Pantry

Summer is always a slow time for donations but the need ever takes a vacation!

SHIM's food pantries help neighbors put healthy meals on the table, as they're stocked with non-perishable staples (like canned meats, dried beans, rice and cereal), personal care items, baby food and diapers, household cleaning supplies, and fresh items like meat, cheese, eggs and, during growing season, a bounty of fresh produce from our community gardens.



Here, families may pick out the items they need for nutritious, balanced meals. **Last year, SHIM's pantries served more than 600 families and 1,700 individuals.**

Baskets are in the Narthex for any non-perishable donations you may like to make. Thank You!!

Calling All Instrumentalists!

What would it mean to see your child play their instrument in church?

For those who used to play when younger, wouldn't it be fun to pull the horn from the closet and play again to the glory of God?



Pastor Tom is interested in organizing a band of all interested musicians to play in worship before the end of the summer.

If you have played an instrument for at least a year and want to try out this new idea please see Pastor Tom immediately! We will be organizing rehearsals very soon

Book Club News!

Here are the upcoming book selections:



Thursday, July 20

“Hillbilly Elegy”
by J.D. Vance

Thursday, August 17

“The Time Machine” by H. G. Wells (1895)

Back to regular schedule (third Friday of the month)

Friday, September 15

no selection yet

Friday, October 20

no selection yet

Friday, November 17

no selection yet

Friday, December 15

“Wait, What? And Life’s Other Essential Questions” by James E. Ryan

We meet at Panera Bread in South Park Shops at 7:30 p.m.

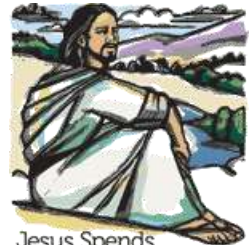
(Book selections are posted on the church website calendar on Book Club dates at www.firstbethelumc.org)

The Perks of Alone Time

“Only those who learn to live with loneliness can come to know themselves and life,” said poet Carl Sandburg. He described walking in nature, listening to the “sounds of loneliness” and wondering, “Who are you, Sandburg? Where have you been, and where are you going?”

Jesus also valued alone time with God in nature. He often withdrew to pray after being with crowds of people and his disciples. Spending one-on-one time with God helps us find and focus on his mission for our lives.

He also uses it to strengthen us for carrying out his important work.



Jesus Spends
Some Time Alone

Summer is a time of refreshment for the body and the spirit as well.

The Power of Weakness

In her remarkable book, *Tramp for the Lord*, Corrie ten Boom describes traveling to Russia during the Cold War — when Christians were being persecuted — to thank an old woman who'd been secretly translating Christian books (including ten Boom's). Ravaged by multiple sclerosis, the woman could move only an index finger. Yet with it she typed constantly, translating words while praying for people who'd eventually read them.

Ten Boom's reaction was one of frustration, "Oh Lord, why don't you heal her?" But the woman's husband said God had a purpose in his wife's suffering. Although the secret police closely watched *other* Christians, they left this woman alone, assuming she couldn't accomplish anything.

Jesus works through our weaknesses, making his power perfect in them (check out 2 Corinthians 12:9). He doesn't ask if we're capable — only if we're willing.

Vacation Bible School – July 17-21!

It's that time again – time to help our church and neighborhood kids learn about Jesus!

Our 2017 VBS Program! "Hero Central," for children age 3 thru Grade 4, will help children discover their strength in God and realize that **THEY** are God's heroes!

The kids will enjoy games, stories, crafts, science projects, and music!



Registration forms are in the Narthex or call 412-835-0700!

Would you like to help? We could still use assistants for music, snacks, crafts and science, as well as people to lead the children from activity to activity. If you are interested please contact Alyssa Stadelman at 412-652-8256.



The First Bethel Church Office will be closed July 24-28, 2017.

If you need assistance please contact Pastor Tom at 412-835-0700 x102 or Kings School Kids at 412-835-6141

Hymn History – The Old Rugged Cross

During the early years of his ministry, Rev. George Bennard was “praying for a full understanding of the cross and its plan in Christianity.”

Consequently, he spent hours in study, prayer and meditation, until he could say, “I saw the Christ of the cross as if I were seeing John 3:16 leave the printed page, take form and act out the meaning of redemption.” During these days the theme of what was to be his most successful song came to him.

He was staying in the Methodist parsonage at Pokagon, Michigan, while engaged in series of service in the Pokagon Church when he finally perfected his song and wrote down the words and music.

“Old Rugged Cross Day” is observed annually at this Church, and on a large stone nearby is carved the names of the original singers and the significance of the event.

The song became immediately popular. Introduced before a large convention in Chicago, its fame spread rapidly throughout the Christian world.

Today, a twelve-foot high wooden cross stands on a roadside near Reed City, Michigan, honoring the composer.

A Word from Frederick Buechner

The Final Secret, I think, is this: that the words "You shall love the Lord your God" become in the end less a command than a promise. And the promise is that, yes, on the weary feet of faith and the fragile wings of hope, we will come to love him at last as from the first he has loved us—loved us even in the wilderness, especially in the wilderness, because he has been in the wilderness with us. He has been in the wilderness for us. He has been acquainted with our grief. And, loving him, we will come at last to love each other too so that, in the end, the name taped on every door will be the name of the one we love.



"And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart, and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you rise."

And rise we shall, out of the wilderness, every last one of us, even as out of the wilderness Christ rose before us. That is the promise, and the greatest of all promises.

This is a familiar story. Mark Twain refers to it in one of his books. He recalls a visit to the Holy Land and a stay in Capernaum. It was a moonlit night, so he decided to take his wife on a romantic boat ride on the Sea of Galilee. Twain asked a man in a rowboat how much he would charge to take them out on the water. The man saw Twain's white suit, white shoes and white hat and supposed he was a rich Texan. So he said the cost would be twenty-five dollars. Twain walked away as he said, "Now I know why Jesus walked."



Jesus Walks on Water

Nar-Anon Meets at First Bethel Church

The Nar-Anon Family Groups is primarily for those who know or have known a feeling of desperation concerning the addiction problem of someone very near to you. We have traveled that unhappy road too, and found the answer with serenity and peace of mind.

When you come into the family group, you are no longer alone, but among true friends who understand your problem as few others could. We respect your confidence and anonymity as we know you will respect ours. We hope to give you the assurance that no situation is too difficult and no unhappiness is too great to be overcome.

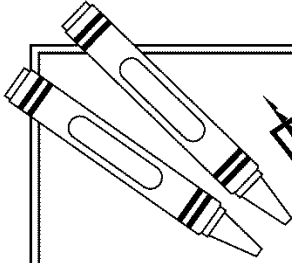
Our program, which is not a religious one but a spiritual way of life, is based on the Twelve Steps of Nar-Anon. We've found that the working of these steps will bring the solution to practically any problem. We urge you to take this program and its twelve steps seriously. It has been as helpful to us as the Narcotics Anonymous program is to the addict. We only ask for the wisdom and courage to see ourselves as we really are, to do something about ourselves with the help of a Higher Power as we understand this, and for the grace to release our addicts with love and cease trying to change them.



Keep an open mind and attend as many meetings as possible. Feel free to share during the meeting. You may ask questions after the meeting. You'll soon make friends and will feel very much a part of the group.

With the understanding that addiction is a disease, and the realization that we are powerless over it, as well as over other people's lives, we are ready to do something useful and constructive with our own. Then, and only then, can we be of any help to others.

Join us very Tuesday at 7 pm in the Susanna Wesley Room



PUZZLE

BE HAPPY IN THE LORD

Happiness and joy are frequent themes in the Old Testament book of Psalms.

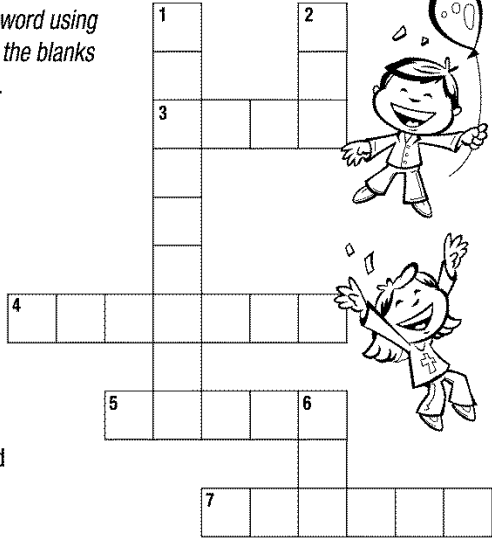
Directions: Solve the crossword using the clues below. Then fill in the blanks to complete the Bible verse.

ACROSS

3. A word for happy (rhymes with had)
4. What you do when you're very happy
5. A song written by David
7. Full of joy

DOWN

1. People who obey God
2. Our Creator
6. The month after April



"But may the 1. _____ be 3. _____ and
 4. _____ before 2. _____; 6. _____ they
 be happy and 7. _____." 5. _____ 68:3, NIV

Answers: (across) 3. glad, 4. rejoice, 5. psalm, 7. joyful; (down) 1. righteous, 2. God, 6. may and joyful." Psalm 68:3, NIV