

The Pastor's Notebook

As many of you may know, the days since Easter have been filled with tension and deep concern for my father's health. On the day after Easter he went to the hospital and, but for a few days, he has been in a hospital ever since. We were told he was suffering from cancer, no real surprise after smoking for 77 year, and that things looked bleak. Well, as many who have been in similar circumstances can attest, we were speechless. Our hearts were broken. Tears filled our eyes and pain our hearts. For only the second time in my adult life I didn't know what to pray for. Was it fair to ask God to prolong his life for our sakes? Was it appropriate to ask God to take him when I knew he wanted to live. I sat in silence before the altar in the sanctuary of our church.

That's when I remembered something the beloved Christian pastor and teacher Tony Campolo wrote some time ago:

There is a special way to pray in which we let the Holy Spirit take control of what we pray. Only then do our hearts transcend the often-selfish desires of our hearts. When we allow the Spirit of God to direct our praying, then the prayers that we ought to be praying will fly to the throne of grace. Prayers that we, with our limitations, could never put into words are uttered, as the Spirit prays through us. More things are accomplished by this kind of praying than this world can ever imagine."

In that moment I was at peace, cradled in the comfort of a God who understands and loves. Darkness was pierced by the light of heavenly grace and I knew, whatever happened, my dad and my family would be fine, upheld, and strengthened. Uncertainty and anxiety would not prevail.

Well, yesterday we were told by our new doctors that my dad has many health concerns but he doesn't have cancer; that after a number of tests and procedures they were confident that their diagnosis and treatment plan would enhance the quality of his life; that he wasn't going to run a marathon, but he wasn't actively dying either.

Please understand that I am, in no way, saying that my prayers were any better or different than those who have begged God for the life of a mother or father. There are many mysteries in life I can't explain. But I most certainly am saying that when in the grip of fear and confusion we have a God whose Spirit will assist us and guide us through what has been unbearable at times these past several weeks.

On the verge of Pentecost Sunday, on which we celebrate the pouring out of God's Spirit on the disciples and church, may you too know the reassuring presence of God when you are left speechless by life.

My family thanks God for your prayers, compassion...and you!

- Pastor Tom

Summer Worship Schedule

Don't forget to join the entire First Bethel family for worship!

**Beginning June 4 through September 3
we will worship at 10 a.m. each week.**

FaithLink will gather at 9:15 a.m.

Kid's Sunday School begins July 2 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

Church Directories Still Available!

If you don't already have a copy of our most recent church pictorial directory, there are extra copies available for \$5 each. The photos are a great way to learn the names of folks you see in church and there are also photos of groups and activities that you may want to be a part of. Pick up a copy in the back of the church, or see Melissa Zelinsky in the church office.

Serving God's People!

Ministry Scheduler Pro is an online scheduling program used by First Bethel to schedule volunteers for several ministries. You can access everything online and there's even an app! 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. You can enter dates when you're unavailable to serve, request subs, and view the published schedules any time. The summer schedule will be published soon so get your info in soon. Let us know if you want to be a part of these ministries and you don't have Internet access – that works too!



Youth Group News!

All youth in grades 6 thru 12 are welcome to become part of our growing and exciting youth ministry!



June 10 - Crohn's and Colitis walk.

Join Team Jackalope to support our own youth group member, Jack Hatten, as we walk together to raise awareness and funds for a cure. Hartwood Acres. More details to come!





Blessing of the Bikes Ride!
On Sunday June 4th

Spaces Are Running Out
Did You Sign Up In The
Narthex?



(Meet in South Park by the Ice Skating Rink at 3:00pm)

Call Lynda at 412-835- 6141 for more info!



Church Pirate Game - July 16 at 1:35 pm

All kids 14 and under get a W.B. Mason Collectible Truck and after the game can go onto the field and run the bases!

Tickets are \$26.00

Don't be a foul ball – clear the bases with a fun-filled day at PNC Park!

Call Lynda at 412-835- 6141 for tickets!

Church Picnic!

September 24th 4:00 p.m.



Don't miss out on the games, food and fun at Peterswood Park!



**BOOK
CLUB**

We will meet Thursday, June 15th, at 7:30 p.m. at Panera's in the South Park Shops. We will discuss *The Well and the Mine* by Gin Phillips.

Here is a description of the book from Amazon.com:

The Well and the Mine explores the value of community, charity, family, and hope that we can give each other during a time of hardship. In a small Alabama coal-mining town during the summer of 1931, nine-year-old Tess Moore sits on her back porch and watches a woman toss a baby into her family's well without a word. This shocking act of violence sets in motion a chain of events that forces Tess and her older sister Virgie to look beyond their own door and learn the value of kindness and lending a helping hand.

Join us for a discussion of the book. Even if you haven't read the book, the book club is always a great place to pick up recommendations about books that others are reading. Also, the club is always open to suggestions for new books to read. New members are always welcome. And, anyone who has an interest in a particular book is welcome to join us.

July's selection: *Hillbilly Elegy* by J. D. Vance



Here Am I....Send Me

by Gloria Stephan

Our ASP destination this year is Boyd County, Kentucky. I originally reported that we were going to another Kentucky location, but I either misread the original confirmation or something changed. What I do know is that we'll be sent exactly where we're supposed to be. Things have a way of working out that way on ASP.

Last year, we originally planned to go to Kentucky, were assigned to Virginia, and ended up with a worksite in Princeton, West Virginia. The connections made and the relationships that were built that week were innumerable. One of those connections came full circle for me last week.

On last year's trip, I was standing outside the van at our worksite when a man drove up and asked about the work ASP was doing in the area and how he might get similar help. I handed him an application but something told me to ask if he wanted me to help him fill it out. When I asked how to spell his street name and he handed me his driver's license in response, I realized that I was in the right place at the right time to have this encounter. We had a wonderful conversation, I turned in the application to the ASP staff later that evening, and I learned not to take the ability to fill out a form for granted.

Fast forward almost a year and I'm in Guyan Valley, West Virginia volunteering as a "Helping Hand" with ASP doing "In Home Visits" to help the ASP staff select this summer's projects. On the second day, we had a stack of 15 homes to visit and I looked at the first one in the pile, and guess which application it was? Yes, the one I filled out for a stranger while standing on a road in Princeton West Virginia.

Later that day I had the opportunity to reconnect with James, we met his family and saw his home in serious need of repair. We also had four other applications in the same neighborhood where our

teams served last year and I had the chance to talk with one of the homeowners whose home we had worked on. Coincidence? Perhaps. But I think it's more about going where you're sent, seeing what's in front of you, and being open to what God is calling you to do.

See me in church or send me an email at gstephan57@gmail.com if you want to know more about ASP. Our trip is scheduled for June 18-24 **and there is room for you!**

Outreach Update!

A crew of 7 people went to Pittsburgh's Northside and the New Hope United Methodist Church on April 2nd to serve over 135 meals. Our ministry to those in need, the Daily Bread, experienced a most unusual situation - we actually ran out of food! That has not happened in quite a few years. Everyone had at least one meal.



A special thanks goes out to Rick and Kathy Rickenbach, Keith Swan, Susan Tillack, Doris Woll, and Lem Irick for helping to make and serve the meal. **Our next time to serve Daily Bread is June 11.**



The Outreach Committee is also planning a very special event next month, “**Christmas in July,**” in support of The Nyadire Connection in Zimbabwe! Watch the Sunday Bulletin and the Kings Light for more details.

Faith is better understood as a verb than as a noun, as a process than as a possession. It is on-again-off-again rather than once-and-for-all. Faith is not being sure where you're going, but going anyway. A journey without maps. As theologian Paul Tillich said ... doubt isn't the opposite of faith; it is an element of faith.

- Frederick Buechner

Library News – Check out our recently donated books:

SHIP OF DREAMS has long been a children's bedtime favorite – especially because of its magical paintings by author/artist *Dean Morrissey*. It is the story of little Joey, who rides his “Redd Rocket” on a journey to meet the *Sandman* and his amazing balloon ship. The *New York Times* chose this 40-page dreamy adventure as one of the best illustrated children's books (1994). One reviewer wrote: “Children deserve books equal to the beauty of their imaginations. This is it.” (Ages 3-7.)

HOW FULL IS YOUR BUCKET? suggests that most of us don't give, or receive, enough praise. This short book (just 128 pages) was produced by a grandson/grandfather team and became a best-seller. (We have the 2015 updated edition.) It's an upbeat guide on how we can increase the positive moments in our lives while reducing the negative ones. The book was written by business consultant/author *Tom Rath* and his grandfather, *Donald Clifton*. (Clifton died in 2003. The *American Psychological Association* cited him as the “grandfather of positive psychology.”)



THE MAGNOLIA STORY is a memoir by *Chip* and *Joanna Gaines*, stars of HGTV's “Fixer Upper.” It's a behind-the-scenes look at the popular husband and wife team and their home remodeling business in Waco, TX. They tell how prayers have guided them along the way. The story takes them from their very first job “to the project that nearly cost them everything.” They've been described as examples of “how hard work, faith and humility can make dreams come true.”

CHARACTER: PROFILES IN PRESIDENTIAL COURAGE by TV newsman *Chris Wallace* covers 16 “notable acts of presidential courage.” Presidents featured in this 2004 book include *George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, Harry Truman, John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan* and *George W. Bush*.

Vacation Bible School!

First Bethel's Vacation Bible School is coming and will feature the exciting, "Hero Central" Program! Children age 3 thru Grade 4 are encouraged to attend and discover their strength in God and realize that they are God's heroes!



July 24-28 6:15-7:45 p.m.

We'll gather from for music, crafts, stories, games, science and more!! Call the church office at 412-835-0700 to sign up!! **Want to lend a hand as a guide, teacher or helper? Contact Alyssa Stadelman at 612-652-8256. Thanks!**

4 Thursdays – Carpe Diem!

Where did the spark of passion go? Passion for God? Passion for God's wonderful Creation? Passion for life? Tony Campolo says we've let go of our dreams and resigned ourselves to a life of quiet frustration. With enthusiasm and humor Campolo says, ENOUGH! It's time to SEIZE THE DAY, "Carpe Diem! Together we will be challenged to let go of whatever is holding us back, and discover how to wake up refreshed and ready to make the most of each day. Get revved up to take life back into your own hands, and learn how to squeeze the last drop out of every day! **Beginning July 6 at 7 pm**

Prayer's Power!

Great changes are the result of fervent prayer, as pastor and evangelist A.C. Dixon noted: "The revival which we call the Reformation was born in prayer. Martin Luther's habit was to pray three hours a day. The knees of Philipp Melanchthon were found after his death to have been made calloused by kneeling. Pentecost was preceded by 10 days of supplication and prayer. Peter and John were in the spirit of prayer on their way into the temple, when the other great revival in which many were converted was commenced. ... Oh, for Elijahs who can break up the spiritual drought by praying rain out of the skies!"

PENTECOST IS COMING!

Plan to be here on **Sunday June 4th** as we celebrate the gift of God's Holy Spirit to the first disciples and the continued presence of the Spirit today! Wear red, enjoy the invigorating Spirit, and dream of how the mighty presence of God can re-form the church for today! WORSHIP is at 10 a.m.!

Ruth — a Pentecost story?

The disciples were celebrating Pentecost, originally a Jewish festival, when the Holy Spirit descended on them and birthed the church. Pentecost, which began as a harvest festival, had come to commemorate the giving of the law. The book of Ruth became integral to festival worship.

Why Ruth? This short story doesn't mention the law, let alone God giving it to Moses. Yet in Ruth's devotion to her mother-in-law ("Where you go I will go Your people will be my people ... " (Ruth 1:16), she fulfills not just the letter but the spirit of the law: lovingkindness — all the more remarkable because she's a foreigner. Boaz, too, demonstrates exorbitant kindness to Ruth.

As Christians celebrate the Spirit bridging differences in Jerusalem, uniting all nationalities by making the gospel message intelligible to all people, we too can remember Ruth's story. For in it, God unites two enemy peoples for his grand purpose: Boaz and Ruth's marriage leads to King David and, ultimately, to King Jesus. Today, the Holy Spirit continues to unite all categories of people under Christ's reign for the good of the world.

"The wizard [of Oz] says look inside yourself and find self. God says look inside yourself and find the Holy Spirit. The first will get you to Kansas. The latter will get you to heaven. Take your pick."

- Max Lucado

Such a Blessing!

Dear friends at First Bethel United Methodist Church,

Thank you for your generous donation of eyeglasses to the ministry of Ministry Opportunities Short Term (MOST) Your donation and prayers are very much appreciated and will assist others to see more clearly!

In Christ, Lynn Wrightson

Martha Circle News!

Women in Ministry

The June meeting will be held at the home of Donna Hennen on Wednesday, June 14 at 6:00 pm. June is the month for our annual picnic. Martha Circle members are thankful for what God has given us and thankful we are able to reach out to help others as needed. We pray for a healthy and safe summer season for all. No meetings are scheduled for us in July and August.



Philippians 4:6 – Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all he has done.

- Donna Hennen

Shepherds!

We wish to thank all the Shepherds for faithfully visiting our homebound this year: Donna Hennen, Lem Irick, Kathy & Rick Rickenbach, and Lorna Schlutz. Many thanks to those who helped make the gifts: King School Kids, Lea Cook, Marilyn Kebe, and members of Martha Circle. Some gifts are taken by family members.



If you would like to visit or help make gifts, please call Barb Dillon at 412-833-2991. You will brighten someone's life and make new friends. We currently have about 15 homebound and more are added as needed.