

The Pastor's Notebook

I performed a lovely wedding not too long ago. And one of the uniquely beautiful aspects of the wedding was the fact that the bride and groom wanted hymns to be a part of their ceremony. Delighted by the thought of joyful singing we selected a few “popular favorites” which everyone surely knew. We were wrong. Only a handful of people out of the 150-person congregation sang at all, and frankly we were very disappointed.

They did know, however, the Lord's Prayer. I have noticed over the years that if people know anything in a service, they usually know the Lord's Prayer, which got me to thinking about it, about what we're really saying. About the time I was giving all this some thought I came across the following writing called, “I Cannot Pray.”



I cannot say OUR if my religion has no room for others and their needs.

I cannot say FATHER if I do not demonstrate this relationship in my daily life.

I cannot say WHO ART IN HEAVEN if all my interests and pursuits are in earthly things.

I cannot say HALLOWED BE THY NAME if I, who am called by his name, am not holy.

I cannot say THY KINGDOM COME if I am unwilling to give up my own sovereignty and accept the righteous reign of God.

I cannot say THY WILL BE DONE if I am unwilling or resentful of having it in my life.

I cannot say ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN unless I am

truly ready to give myself to his service here and now.

I cannot say GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD without expending honest effort for it or by ignoring the genuine needs of others.

I cannot say FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US if I continue to harbor a grudge against anyone.

I cannot say LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION if I deliberately choose to remain in a situation where I am likely to be tempted.

I cannot say DELIVER US FROM EVIL if I am not prepared to fight in the spiritual realm with the weapon of prayer.

I cannot say THINE IS THE KINGDOM if I do not give the King the disciplined obedience of a loyal subject.

I cannot say THINE IS THE POWER if I fear what my neighbors and friends may say or do.

I cannot say THINE IS THE GLORY if I am seeking my own glory first.

I cannot say FOREVER if I am too anxious about each day's affairs.

I cannot say AMEN unless I honestly say, "Cost what it may, this is my prayer."

During the Lenten season, as we say the Lord's Prayer at First Bethel Church, let's be sure we understand how challenging, uniting, and truly enriching, such a prayer really is...just like the one who gave it to us.

God bless you always,

Pastor Tom



Guidance for the Church



Often we combat our evil thoughts most effectively if we absolutely refuse to allow them to be expressed in words... Thus it must be a decisive rule of every Christian fellowship that each individual is prohibited from saying much that occurs to him. This prohibition does not include the personal word of advice and guidance. But to speak (negatively) about a brother is

forbidden, even under the cloak of help and goodwill; for it is precisely in this guise that the spirit of hatred among brothers creeps in when it is seeking to create mischief.

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer,

Living Last Supper – April 13th

CALLING ALL ACTORS! We're looking for men and women who would like to portray followers of Jesus on the most important night in history! Scripts will be given soon to those who want to bring the Maundy Thursday story to life in the sanctuary.

We'll join Jesus and his disciples in the Upper Room on Thursday April 2 at 7:30 p.m. for a dramatic depiction of the Lord's final evening with his friends. This final



gathering in the Upper Room allows you to hear the disciples' thoughts as Jesus reveals his betrayal and listen as they recall their time with him. Share in the Last Supper and accompany Jesus as he departs for the Garden of Gathesemane. Call Pastor Tom at 412-722-8316 for more information on how to get involved!

Notes From the Book Club

Book Club will meet Friday, March 17th, at 7:30 p.m. at Panera's in the South Park Shops. We will discuss Genghis: Birth of an Empire by Conn Iggulden. Here is a description of the book from Amazon.com:

Iggulden turns to another of history's great conquerors, Genghis Khan, for a new series of brilliantly imagined historical fiction. Future conqueror Temujin—"a man of iron"—is born to the khan (ruler) of a fierce Mongol tribe that roams central Asia's steppes in the 12th century. When his father is killed by Tartar raiders, a rival claims the tribe and banishes Temujin's family. Temujin dreams of gathering similar outcasts—wanderers and herdsmen—into a new tribe. Temujin launches an ambitious campaign to unite the Mongol tribes "after a thousand years of warfare" into a single people, defeat the Tartars, and invade China. Building on the fragments of Genghis's life, Iggulden weaves a spellbinding story of an exotic and "unforgiving land" and the enigmatic young man, who sets out to tame it. This is historical fiction of the first order.

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.



April's book is Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult.

Like to sing, dance, recite poetry, play an instrument, yodel, or ride a unicycle? A Celebration of Gifts is coming soon! Watch for details in the bulletin and in the next King's Light!

The Bistros Are Back!



The Appalachia Service Project is a Christian ministry, open to all people, that inspires hope and service through volunteer home repair in Central Appalachia. First Bethel is sending 21 volunteers to Kentucky the week of June 18 to participate in ASP for the 18th consecutive year.

If you're new around here, you may be wondering what the Bistros are or how you can help. If you've been around awhile, let me remind you why Bistros have become an ASP tradition and why you'll want to mark your calendars so you can join us for dinner or help with hosting a Bistro.

ASP Bistros are delicious fellowship dinners held as fundraisers for our Appalachia Service Project youth mission trip.

Bistros have been an important way for the ASP volunteers to raise awareness of the ministry and it gives our whole church family an opportunity to participate in making the trip a reality through their support. The funds we raise through meal purchases are but a small part of what happens during Bistros. You'll see folks of all ages preparing food, setting tables, making signs, serving, eating, sharing stories, and being in fellowship around this outreach ministry.

Bistros give us a chance to work together and do more together than we ever could on our own.

ASP Bistros will be held from 5PM-6:45PM in the Suzanna Wesley Room on five Wednesday evenings during Lent: March 8, March 15, March 22, March 29 and April 2.

Cost of the meals is a free will offering and although the menu



changes each week, it always includes deliciousness, a kid's meal choice, and yummy desserts.

The ASP volunteers will be asking for lots of help with menu planning, food donations, shopping, cooking, baking, serving, cleanup and advertising. Please say "yes" and know you've helped get our volunteers to Kentucky!

Everyone is invited to enjoy delicious meals and fellowship and all proceeds benefit our 2017 trip. See you at Bistro!

- Gloria Stephan

Calling All Women!

Martha Circle will meet Wed, March 8th at 7 PM. Mission-minded, the Circle has collected items for the SHIM Food Pantry, made gifts to be given to the homebound through our Shepherd's ministry, engages in a meaningful prayer ministry and more! A great place to meet friends, the Martha Circle is open to all the women of the church. If you'd like more information, please contact Donna Hennen.



Ash Wednesday – March 1st

Mark the beginning of Lent with a time of prayer, spiritual examination, and the opportunity to have ashes imposed upon our forehead or hands.



11 a.m. to 1 pm – Silent reflection and ashes in the sanctuary

7:30 pm – A Worship Service of Remembrance in the sanctuary

How Much or How Often?

Hello, it's your Chair of Stewardship (Stephanie Alstadt), again! And I'm STILL thinking about the promises we made when we joined First Bethel—"to support First Bethel with our Prayers, Presence, Gifts, Service and Witness.

John Wesley, the founder of what became The Methodist Church called them "the means of Grace." I've always been uncomfortable with the perception that Stewardship is ONLY about how MUCH money one gives to the Church. The promises make it clear that it's about what we do as Christians, and how we're trying to grow in Faith. So maybe it's more important to think about how often OFTEN we pray, study the Bible, attend Worship, help out with Ministry, and yes, donate money.

Whatever a living thing needs to grow—for instance, water, fertilizer & light for plants—they need it regularly, not just all of it at one time. The same is true for our spiritual growth—we need to attend church, pray, give of our gifts, etc. regularly.

So as we ALL struggle to keep our promises, remember that how often matters, not just how much.

Important Dates Coming Up!

- Ash Wednesday – Lent begins, *March 1*
- World Day of Prayer, *March 3*
- Daylight-Saving Time begins, *March 12*
- First day of spring, *March 20*
- Palm Sunday, *April 9*
- Holy Week, *April 9-15*
- Maundy Thursday, *April 13*
- Good Friday, *April 14*
- Holy Saturday, *April 15*
- Easter Sunday, *April 16*

Library News

Our shelves are overflowing with new books, many of which were recently donated by a thoughtful friend of our Church Library. Here are just a couple of our new additions:



DEVOTION: An Epic Story of Heroism, Friendship and Sacrifice. This highly praised Korean War book features *Lieutenant Tom Hudner*, a privileged white New Englander, and *Ensign Jesse Brown*, the Navy's first black carrier pilot. The two aviators became friends and wingmen in Fighter Squadron 32 at a time when much of America was divided by segregation. Brown, of Mississippi, described as a man defending people back in the United States who "wouldn't even serve him in a bar," crashes on a remote mountaintop while flying in support of troops in the Battle of Chosin Reservoir. Hudner then crash-landed his own plane in an attempt to rescue his friend. Hudner (who is now 92), received the *Medal of Honor*. The frigate *USS Jesse L. Brown* was named for the man he tried so hard to save. A reviewer said *Devotion* is a story of "true friendship across the racial divide." The author is *Adam Makos*, whose other military bestsellers include **Voices of the Pacific** and **A Higher Call**.

WHY WON'T YOU APOLOGIZE? focuses on two words, "I'm sorry," and why it's so hard for some people to use them. The author is *Dr. Harriet Lerner*, a psychologist who has studied the "art of apology" for more than two decades. She says the courage to apologize and the "wisdom and clarity to do so wisely and well" is at the heart of restoring compromised and broken relationships, and of effective leadership, parenting, friendship, personal integrity "and what we call love." Lerner explains why the people who do the worst things are least likely to apologize and how some of us make matters worse by over-apologizing. "A wholehearted apology means valuing the relationship and accepting responsibility for our part without a hint of evasion, excuse-making or blaming." A publisher's note says

Lerner “helps the injured person resist pressure to forgive too easily and challenges the popular notion that forgiveness is the only path to peace of mind.” The subtitle of this book is **Healing Big Betrayals and Everyday Hurts.**

- Your Library Staff

Saturday Night IS REALLY Live!

First Bethel is a lively place on the first Saturday of every month when we gather for our Coffeehouse Worship Service. In March we'll feature the talented singer Jessica Best and guitarist Gary Graney (yep, they're daughter and dad) and we'll also be joined by the Pittsburgh Woodwind Ensemble, a group of some of the best instrumentalists from around the city. Enjoy this casual gathering of talented musicians, artists and those interested in a unique worship experience on **March 4 at 6 pm in Founders Hall!** Bring a friend! **Would you like to help provide beverages and snacks? See Pastor Tom today!**



Men's Ministry at First Bethel

Who says there's nothing new under the sun? (*Actually, the Book of Ecclesiastes, but I digress*) Something new is happen at the church!



Men's Group

There's a new and growing men's ministry at First Bethel that is looking to develop various ways of building strong men of faith. All men are invited to join this fellowship and help chart the course of an exciting and meaningful ministry! We meet the last Sunday of every month at 10 a.m. in Founders Hall. Hope to see you there! See Ken Williams or John Brevard for more information!

A Lenten Time of Meaningful Reflection

Make the Lenten season more significant this year by joining your friends for an evening of scripture, quiet reflection, music and prayer. Our **Taize Prayer Service** is a simple, yet powerful occasion for those who enter the softly lit sanctuary to allow the presence of Christ to surround them. We sing uncomplicated songs, uncluttered by too many words, allowing the mystery of God to become tangible through the beauty of simplicity.

Through the Taizé service, participants can worship in a community setting, yet remain open to the voice of God and discover the prayer within themselves.

First Bethel Church's next 55-minute Taize Prayer Service is scheduled for March 15 at 7:00 p.m.



Giving Up Guilt for Lent

Rev. Greg Boyle, a Jesuit priest who ministers to high-risk youth in Los Angeles, once quipped, “I ... don’t do guilt. I gave it up for Lent years ago.” Many Christians give up something for Lent but usually not guilt! Rather, Lent is seen as a time to somberly examine our sinful nature.

Having witnessed sin’s tragic effects through addiction, violence and gang warfare, Father Boyle realizes that dwelling on guilt doesn’t lead to hope or healing. Instead, he helps young people discover their God-given strengths and their ability to make life-affirming choices. His nonprofit Homeboy Industries provides positive alternatives for teenagers, who are reminded not of their guilt but of their identity as God’s beloved children.

On Good Friday Jesus conquered sin and death so we don’t have to wallow in guilt. Giving our lives to God frees us to live in the joy of forgiveness.



**It's
A
HIT!**



**Mark Your Calendars
For The Annual
First Bethel Church
Pirates Game!**

July 16th 1:35



Tickets will be \$26.00

**Space is Limited
Reserve Your Tickets Today!
Call Lynda Pore at 412-835-6141**

Phil and Connie Rush would like to express thanks to all for the love and support shown us during our recent surgeries. Tom's visits, your prayers, cards, calls, etc. meant so much. We are truly blessed to be a part of this wonderful church family for 45 years.

Love and blessings to all!



First Bethel Family Fun Night

At

Legacy Lanes

(5024 Curry Rd. Pittsburgh 15236)



Sunday March 26th

3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

\$10.00 per person

Cost includes 2 hours of bowling,

Shoe rental,

2 slices of pizza and

Unlimited soft drinks



Please RSVP to Lynda by March 15th

So we can reserve everyone a space

Join us for an afternoon of

FUN!!!!



Volunteers Needed!

We're looking for those who would like to assist on Sundays. Enjoy a more active life in the Church by calling the office at 412-835-0700 and begin to make a difference!



- **As a liturgist** - Adults and youth in grades 8 or higher are invited to open worship by leading the congregation in the Call to Worship and Prayer, and to have the honor of reading Scripture as well.
- **As a Children's Message leader** – Experience the joy of sharing a few minutes with our children as they discover the good news of Jesus Christ and discover a welcoming place for them in worship. *Please see Pastor Tom if interested.*
- **As an acolyte** – Children in grades thru 6 are invited to share the light of Christ as a Sunday morning acolyte. Bring the Light of Truth and Love into worship and later carry the Light out as a sign of God's presence leading us into the world in service. *Training with Janice Evans will begin soon!*
- **Sunday Morning Nursery** – Of course children are welcome to stay in the sanctuary during Sunday worship, but there is a nursery available right upstairs when needed. We just need a few more adults to staff the nursery for an hour every few weeks during the 9 and 11 a.m. services. If you're able to help, please add this to your list in the Ministry Pro scheduling software, or call the church office. We need you so we can guarantee a safe, caring place for our littlest ones.
- **Collection Counters** – Each Sunday we need 2 people to process the weekly collection by verifying the offering envelope contents, preparing and delivering the bank deposit and reporting totals to the church Office Manager. This job requires basic clerical skills, a commitment to confidentiality and attention to detail. The time required is usually about an hour to an hour and a half. Let the church office know if you're willing to help. Training is required, so call and we'll get you started.

Youth Activities

The Youth Group welcomed 2017 with some great activities including a night at Seven Springs where we enjoyed an awesome snow tubing adventure, a Saturday of ice skating at South Park (and a Dairy Queen run) , and a Sunday afternoon of Laser Tag! More fun and fellowship has been planned for kids in grades 6-12! Don't miss the action and be sure to bring a friend! Call the church office at 412-835-0700 for details.



- Lock-in and Black Light Bash at the Church – March 3
- Movie Night at the Church – March 18

In addition to having fun, the youth participated in “Teens for Jeans” ministry which collects gently used jeans to be given to homeless teens throughout the area. They also debuted a new Instagram Page! This is a great way for the kids to become more involved, get excited about upcoming events and share pics! If they are on Instagram have them follow "firstbethelyouth". Watch for the April-May activities to be announced soon!

Souper Bowl Shows Compassion!

Everyone knows that the Patriots beat the Falcons in the Super Bowl, BUT did you hear the results from the SOUPER BOWL?

Many thanks to all who brought in cans of soup and other items for the SHIM Food Pantry. We collected 221 pounds of food and \$50 too. Thanks for your generosity!

