

The Pastor's Notebook

In her book **Pilgrim at Tinker Creek**, Annie Dillard writes of reading Marius von Senden's book **Space and Sight**. She conveys von Senden's descriptions of what happened when eye surgeons began to perform the first successful operations to remove cataracts. For many of those who had been born with blindness, the experience was terrifying in the beginning. Their brains had never learned how to process and make sense of the images that now confronted their eyes. Shapes appeared flat, meaningless, fearsome. One young man, raised in what was then called an asylum for the blind, threatened to tear his eyes out. A newly sighted girl walked around for two weeks with her eyes closed.



Gradually, Dillard says, many of them passed through their fright and began to work with what their eyes were trying to tell them. She describes one man who, trying to develop his depth perception, would toss a shoe out in front of himself. He would estimate how far away the shoe was, walk toward it, pick it up, toss it again. Slowly, he began to see.

When Peter got out of the boat to walk on the water at Jesus' invitation, it was his way of tossing a shoe, testing his depth perception there on the waters, feeling his way toward the one whom he was still learning to recognize and to know. Yes, Peter faltered as he began to sink but he didn't fail, and when he returns to the other disciples, he carries a new piece of vision with him. Matthew tells us that when Jesus and Peter get into the boat, the wind ceases, and those in the boat worship Jesus, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." For this moment, at least, in this space of calm on a once-contrary sea, they pass through the darkness, and they see.

Where do you recognize the presence of Christ in the midst of your days? How might God be challenging you to deepen your vision, stretch your sight and service? Is it more challenging for you to recognize the holy in places of chaos or of calm? What are you

looking for, and looking at; are you turning your vision toward things that will help you see and know and respond with greater clarity?

By whatever ways it comes to us—by touch, sight, sound and all our senses - may we recognize the presence of the Christ who reaches out for us.

- Pastor Tom

Taize Prayer Service

For the last several decades thousands of Christians and seekers from all parts of the world have experienced the presence of God in fresh and replenishing ways through the contemplative worship services that have grown out of the Protestant monastic community in Taize, France.

On Sept. 20 at 7:30 pm, we will have the opportunity to experience the same presence of God through meditative music, Scripture readings and moments of silence and reflection. The Taizé service is a wonderful way to experience inner stillness and peace in the midst of an often hectic lifestyle. All are invited! Instrumentalists are invited to join as well. See Pastor Tom if interested

Sunday Worship Schedule

*We're back to TWO Services on Sunday morning
beginning September 10th!*

Join us for Worship at 9 or 11 each Sunday morning!

FaithLink Adult Study gathers at 10:00 a.m.

Kid's Sunday School returns at 10:00 a.m.!

Volunteers are our Favorite People!!

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.



Just call the office and we will help you sign up! 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!

Movie Night!!

Come join us on **Sunday, October 8, 2017, at 4:00 p.m.** for a light meal/snacks, followed by the presentation of the movie ***Invictus***, starring Morgan Freeman and Matt Damon (both of whom were nominated for Oscars for their roles in this film).

Freeman plays Nelson Mandela, during his first term as South African President, who hopes to unite his apartheid-torn land by enlisting the national rugby team on a mission to win the 1995 Rugby World Cup.



DINNER
& A Movie

As the film is rated PG-13, we are providing babysitting and an age-appropriate movie for younger children.

Please stay for a discussion afterward about the issues raised in the movie and how we as Christians can do our part to dismantle racism.

A Little History* and Some GREAT News!

There are many of us who remember the Love Bench area that used to be where the Foyer entrance is now with its associated kitchenette. We remember the somewhat steep, make-shift plywood ramp, that ran from that Love Bench area up the steps into the education building, so that we could transport those with special needs because we had no other way. We remember the flooding that used to occur in Founders Hall, its dim lighting and asbestos that was in the ceiling and former floor covering. We remember having to limit ministries due to a lack of adult gathering spaces.

That was seventeen years ago. Many of you who have joined or attend First Bethel more recently, may have no recollection of what our facilities were like at that time. In 1998 we formed a Futures Committee to review our facilities and discover what we could do to make them handicap accessible, more usable and with more dedicated adult spaces to further our ministry.



In 2001 we started the Find Us Faithful campaign to fund the improvements we felt were essential to the spirit of our mission to: *Nourish Every Body, Stimulate Every Spirit, Satisfy Every Soul, For the Glory of God.* This initial campaign raised pledges of over \$400,000 so that work could begin. During the construction process of waterproofing the church foundation, building new entries, a foyer, handicap accessible ramps and restrooms, along with the parlor and kitchenette, problems and issues arose as happens in any building process. Decisions were made to completely remove the asbestos in the ceiling and floor of Founders Hall. Then this area was revamped with a suspended

ceiling, modern lighting and floor covering that makes it the clean, usable and inviting space that it is today.

Another improvement was adding the lift in the foyer area that makes the education level accessible from the sanctuary level without needing to go outside in inclement weather.

Even though compromises were made, all levels of the church property, with the exception of the rooms above the Narthex (*Matthew, Mark and Luke*), are now accessible to everyone, especially those with special needs.



By the time of the dedication of the work and new spaces took place in November of 2004 we had spent over \$800,000, double what we had originally planned. In June of 2004 we entered into a mortgage with PNC for \$475,000. Every three years since then we have conducted a new pledge campaign to pay off this mortgage. Perhaps you remember Lighting the Way, Light for the Path, Living the Faith and, most recently, Fulfilling the Faith.



The Stewardship Committee is thrilled to announce that thanks to the hard work, dedication and yes, FAITHFULNESS of the members of the First Bethel Church Family, we have made our FINAL payment on the loan!!

Please bear in mind that while the loan has been paid off, approximately 70 % of the money came designated for “Fulfilling the Faith.” Additional funds came from the Church’s general budget. So you can continue to contribute to “Fulfilling the Faith” until the end of 2017. Any additional designated funds will decrease the impact on the 2017 budget.

- Stephanie Alstadt - *with historical information from Mike & Gloria Stephan*



Already?! **by Gloria Stephan**

By the time you read this, the “Back to School” sales will be over, and thoughts will shift to fall, football, Halloween, Thanksgiving and yes, Christmas!

I always wince a little when I’m shopping in early summer and the stores have school supplies and Halloween items for sale. I think to myself, “Not already!”. I don’t usually have quite as negative a reaction to rushing the season when coats and boots are on sale, and bathing suits and suntan lotion are on display because that means spring and summer are around the corner.

Believe it or not, our ASP trip is almost three months behind us and it’s time to start planning for next year. Many of the ASP volunteers were talking about “next year” before we arrived back home. That should tell you something about the impact of this ministry on everyone that is touched by it.

Three facts: 1) ASP is an experience that you’ll never forget. 2) ASP builds relationships and strives to eradicate substandard housing conditions in Central Appalachia 3) It takes almost a year of planning and many people and resources to make our Appalachia Service Project mission trip a reality. This is where you come in.

If you are able, and have ever thought about going on ASP, now is the time. Registration for 2018 ASP begins in September and here are the available weeks.

WEEK 1 - JUNE 10-16, 2018

WEEK 2 - JUNE 17-23, 2018

WEEK 3 - JUNE 24-JUNE 30, 2018

WEEK 4 - JULY 1-7, 2018
WEEK 5 - JULY 8-14, 2018
WEEK 6 - JULY 15-21, 2018
WEEK 7 - JULY 22-28, 2018
WEEK 8 - JULY 29-AUG 4, 2018
WEEK 9 - AUGUST 5-11, 2018
WEEK 10 - AUGUST 12-18, 2018
WEEK 11 - AUGUST 19-25, 2018
WEEK 12 - AUGUST 26-SEPT 1, 2018

We're asking youth, their families, and adult Group Leaders for their first and second choice for a week of service. The last few years, we've been attending on Week 2 but we'll plan for the week that works for the most youth. Look ahead to the summer of 2018 and make a commitment to serving with us!

For more information, go to ASP's website at www.ASPhome.org or contact Gloria Stephan at gstephan57@gmail.com

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Music Notes!

I hope you have all enjoyed our music this summer. I mention here those who have so willingly given of their talent and time. We are blessed with so much talent! Those folks are: Tom Barnicott, Alyssa Stadleman, Lauren Johnston, Dorrie Walter, Dale and Lora Hertrick, Pam Bright, Gil Bigenho, Jessie Best, Linda Graney, Gary Graney, Jeff Leonhardt, Keith Swan, Eric and Alex Lauver, and Lorna Schlutz. We also thank our guest accompanists, Sarah Kobylinski, and Deborah Bigenho who were there when Phil couldn't be! Phil, we love you, too!

On another note, it is almost time for our choirs to begin another season. **If you have never participated in our music ministry, please give it serious thought. It's a wonderful way for you to be connected to a small group, working for a common goal, and enjoying fellowship in the presence of God.**

Here is what we are offering this year with the dates when rehearsals will begin:



- **Chancel Choir** (Youth & Adult singers) - Sept. 7, 7:30 pm
- **Wesley Ringers** (Youth & Adult handbells) - Sept 28, 6:30 pm
- **Angels of God** (Singers K-6) - September 13, 6:30 (with Miss Phil!)

There are also many opportunities for vocal and instrumental solos and small groups throughout the season. If you have a talent, let us know!

Remember the "Coffee House Gathering" on the first Saturday of each month at 6pm!

If you have questions or would like more information about our programs, please call or email me at 412-833-3982 or jrfinlay@verizon.net.

See you in church! - Ruth Finlay

Library News – Mercy ... Baptism ... Joy!

Hallelujah Anyway: Rediscovering Mercy is now in our *Anne Lamott* collection. Lamott, very popular among First Bethel readers, writes about many ways to show mercy in this new 176-page book (published in April). “Mercy means that we no longer constantly judge everybody’s large and tiny failures, foolish hearts, dubious convictions and inevitable bad behavior,” she says. We have several books by Lamott, a folksy, witty writer with a reputation for telling it like it is. Her other titles on our shelves include: *Stitches*, *Small Victories*, *Grace* and *Help, Thanks, Wow*.

Water, Come Down! The Day You Were Baptized has been added to our treasure of children’s books. It is written in rhyme and nicely illustrated. The author, *Walter Wangerin Jr.*, describes this as a “story in which both God and creation delight in a particular child – your child.” Wangerin, a college professor, has written more than 40 books, including many for children. He has won the *National Book Award*.



The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World was an instant bestseller after its publication last fall. In this highly praised 351-page volume, the *Dalai Lama* and *Archbishop Desmond Tutu* share their personal stories of living with joy, even in the most difficult and dangerous times. The core message from the two world-famous *Nobel Peace Prize* spiritual leaders (now in their 80s) is “to have joy yourself you must bring joy to others.” This book, new in our Library, is described by different reviewers as “empowering,” “thought-provoking” and “profoundly inspiring.”

--Your Library Staff

Youth Group!

The leaders, youth and parents of our youth ministry met on August 27 and planned an exciting Fall of activities for our young people. (Just wait till you see November and December!) All youth in grades 6-12 are invited to be a part of the fun! See Charlene or Corey Pauline for more details!



- **Sept 10 (Sunday):** Youth Group 4:30-6:00 at church
 - **Sept 17 (Sunday):** Bowling
 - **Sept 24 (Sunday):** First Bethel Church Picnic 4:00 - 7:00 at Peterswood Park (Want to be a helper? We're asking for youth to sign up to help with set-up and/or clean-up)
 - **Oct 1 (Sunday):** Youth Group 4:30-6:00 at church
 - **Oct 15 (Sunday):** Simmons Farm/ Gray's house
 - **Oct 28 (Saturday):** Lock-in Halloween Style!
-

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 September 8th and October 13 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!

SHIM Food Pantry

Thanks for the generous response to our summer appeal!

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 see Pastor Tom immediately! Rehearsals have already begun!

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

- Nelson Mandela

Book Club News!

Remember we'll be back to our regular Book Club schedule in September. We meet on the third Friday of the month at 7:30PM at Panera in South Park shops. In December, we'll meet at the home of one of our members, more later! Here are the upcoming book selections:



- **Friday, September 15** "Killers of the Flower Moon" by David Grann
- **Friday, October 20** "The Day the World Came to Town" (9/11 in Gander Newfoundland)
- **Friday, November 17** "10% Happier; How I Tamed the Voice in My Head, Reduced Stress Without Losing My Edge, and Found Self-Help That Actually Works--A True Story" by Dan Harris
- **Friday, December 15** "Wait, What? And Life's Other Essential Questions" by James E. Ryan

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



What do you see?

Take a look at this line of type:

GODISNOWHERE

Did you read it as "God is nowhere"? Or are you an optimist who read it as "God is now here"? How you see God makes a tremendous difference to your life.

“Find us Faithful” - by Steve Green

We're pilgrims on the journey
Of the narrow road
And those who've gone before us line the way
Cheering on the faithful, encouraging the weary
Their lives a stirring testament to God's sustaining grace
Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses
Let us run the race not only for the prize
But as those who've gone before us, Let us leave to those behind us
The heritage of faithfulness passed on through godly lives

CHORUS:

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful
May the fire of our devotion light their way
May the footprints that we leave
Lead them to believe

And the lives we live inspire them to obey
Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful
After all our hopes and dreams have come and gone
And our children sift through all we've left behind
May the clues that they discover and the memories they uncover
Become the light that leads them to the road we each must find

REPEAT CHORUS

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful
Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful

(continues on next page)

Some of us will recognize this song as the anthem that gave us the theme for the “Find Us Faithful” capital campaign that began in late 2001. I think it’s really great timing, then, that we’re finishing the campaign by paying off the loan AND celebrating First Bethel’s 70th Anniversary this fall. While this is a great time to look back, this song reminds us to look FORWARD. Whatever we have accomplished has been in part because those who came before us laid the foundation. Whatever those who come behind us achieve depends in part on how we maintain that foundation.

So, the Stewardship Committee would like you to prayerfully consider contributing to First Bethel’s next 70 years. A donation to our Endowment Fund will replenish our “rainy day account.” There will also be an opportunity to pledge to “Building the Faith” in 2018, dedicated to the upkeep of our buildings & grounds.

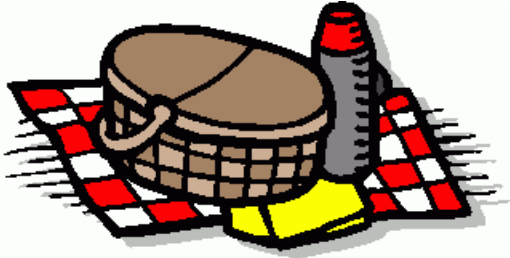


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Church Picnic

September 24, 2017

at Peterswood Park

Pavillion #4

4:00 to 8:00 p.m.



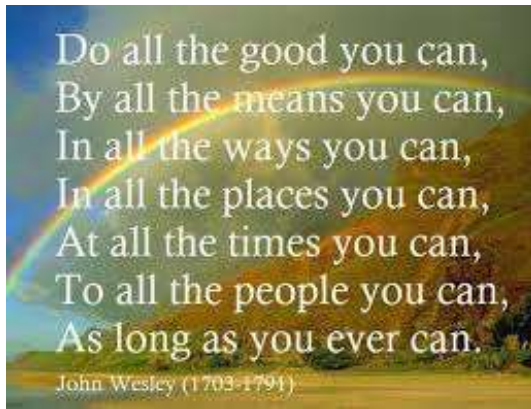
Food, Fellowship and Fun!

Everyone is asked to bring a side dish or dessert to share.

Wish no more!
It's here!

If you can help on the day or help with the planning please see Lynda Pore as soon as possible.

**Please Sign-up in the Narthex
by September 11th.**



Dear First Bethel,

You lived out the above words many years now by purchasing a Chicken Bar BQ ticket(s) . Are you hungry? The teenagers in Nyadire, Zimbabwe **have a deeper hunger**. It is to continue their education by completing O-level Exams. Your amazing, generous support of the Bethel Park/St. Clair Rotary Chicken Bar B Q will benefit approximately 45 teenagers who must take these exams in order to finish highschool. These exams cost \$100.00.

If TNC, (The Nyadire Connection) again sells the most tickets, it will hopefully receive **an additional \$500 BONUS**. For five years now, you have been faithful in supporting this annual Rotary event. Total sales from 5 churches was 794 tickets last year and FB was credited with 70% of the sales. **That percentage was reached because you, FB, purchased so many**. Remember, please, that I will donate your purchased ticket(s) to SHIM and others who otherwise would never consider taking their family “out to eat”.

I am hoping that the Rotary will, once again, present TNC with a check in the Spring to completely cover the O-Level exam’s \$4,500.00 cost. With your support, it will.

Tatenda! from my Nyadire-heart. – Phil Himmler

Have a Heart!

The idea of a spiritual heart transplant is a vivid image to me; once you have the heart of somebody else inside you, then that heart is there. Jesus' heart is inside me, and my heart is gone. So if God were to place a stethoscope against my chest, he would hear the heart of Jesus Christ beating.



- Max Lucado

But What About HERE?

At age 4, Anna was starting to make sense of prayer. Her parents had been praying with her since birth, but now her developing cognitive and language skills caused her to really ponder what prayer meant for *her*.

One night, after tucking her into bed and leaving the room, Anna's dad heard her voice. He paused outside the door to see if she needed something. But she was speaking to her *heavenly* Father: "Dear God," Anna prayed, "when is the best time for me to talk to you? I mean, Mama and Daddy say I can pray anytime, and I know you're always listening. But when will you be listening *especially* hard in Minneapolis?"

Martha Circle Update!

Our meeting date is September 14, 2017 at 7:00 pm in the Susanna Wesley Room. We will be discussing our plans for the remainder of the year. Don't forget a food item for the SHIM Food Pantry.

Thought for the day:

"We all have different gifts, each of which came because of the grace God gave us."



- Romans 12:6



PUZZLE

APPLE OF HIS EYE

Start each school day by remembering God's loving care for you.

Directions: Starting at the K by the stem and going clockwise, circle each word. Then place the words in the blanks to complete Psalm 17:8.



" _____ ;

_____."

PSALM 17:8, NIV

Answer: "Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings." Psalm 17:8, NIV