

## ***The Pastor's Notebook***

Years ago, Detroit, Michigan was a thriving and prosperous city. And one night, without any fanfare at all --in the middle of people hurrying back and forth to dinner, shows, and social engagements -- a man fully dressed in a topcoat and dinner jacket emerged in the middle of the street out of a manhole.

He was coming out of the sewer.

The man was Burch Foraker, president of the Michigan Bell Telephone Company.

Foraker, the president of this prestigious company, knowing that a couple of his men were down in the manhole that night doing some work on broken phone lines, decided to stop down in the underground tunnel on his way home from the theater and have a chat with them.

Can you imagine what it meant to these men to have the president of their company join them down in the bowels of Detroit? I'm sure it left these workers with an impression that said to them the President of their company cared about them to meet them where they toiled.

Can you imagine how much Christ must love us that he left the glories of heaven to share our lives? The truth is that Christ loves us more than we love ourselves. His only desire is our best good.

As we enter Lent on Ash Wednesday, give that some thought and pause for a moment in prayerful gratitude to God that Jesus came into our broken world, with its abuse, greed, violence, racism, bitterness, sexism, false gods, and hatred to offer a more excellent way.

Yes, the way of sacrificial love is costly, but in the end, it is the only way that leads to life here and now, and ultimately forevermore.

Make a commitment to worship this awesome God and to share this most generous love with one another, and the world. God bless you!

*- Pastor Tom*

## ***A Winter Wonderland for the Youth***

The Youth Group returned from their winter retreat on January 14...and what a weekend it was! It was an amazing weekend filled with laughter, self-reflection, sled riding, snowball throwing, hiking to the Jumonville cross with a breathtaking view, games, and fellowship. (Should we mention that this was all done with almost no cell phone time and no complaining about it!) We should all be proud of the youth in this church. The kindness, good deeds and caring that was exhibited by each one of them was truly heartwarming.



Thank you to the chaperones, Janice Evans, Jaime Gray, Amy Scott, Phil Himmler, and Corey Pauline for taking time out of your busy lives to be there with our youth and help them to know that they matter. A special thanks to Pastor Tom who swerved his way up the mountain on Saturday to spend the day with us playing games, dining, and serving us communion. We are blessed by so many who supported this retreat, from the parents of the youth to those who bought candles, donated, and prayed for us. Thank you! We can't wait to go back.

### ***A humble prayer***

Once a person with strong opinions asked his pastor for some guidance in prayer. He said he wrestled with how to pray for others he considered his intellectual inferiors and needed a little help from his spiritual shepherd. Knowing how difficult many found this person to be the pastor said, "When you pray, simply say the following, my friend:

*'Lord, help me to admit when I am wrong, and make me easier to live with when I am right.'*

After following the pastor's guidance everyone found his prayer life, and experiences with others to be much more satisfying.

## ***Destination: Zimbabwe***

Are you interested in joining a 2018 volunteer team trip to The Nyadire United Methodist Mission in Zimbabwe, Africa?

The Nyadire Connection is looking for volunteers with a wide range of skills such as reading with a child, participating in a pastor's workshop, assisting with maintenance, Bible School, or helping at the hospital. There are endless opportunities to engage in cross-cultural relationships, develop partnership programs, serve God and others, and grow spiritually.

If you are interested in joining or hope learn more, Phil Himmler & Amy Scott have gone in the past, or contact Molly at 412-805-6481 or [mollyalice.michael@gmail.com](mailto:mollyalice.michael@gmail.com) or visit our website at [www.nyadire.org](http://www.nyadire.org).

## ***Sarris Candy Sale!***

Yes, it's hard to believe but spring is around the corner and it's time to start thinking about... EASTER! The Sarris candy sale will begin on Sunday, Jan. 21st with orders due by Sunday, Feb. 11th.

**Since we will receive a minimum of 25%, supporting this sale is a great way to help us raise funds to help replace worn and broken items in the church kitchen.**



Prices are the same as if purchased retail and you can enjoy the convenience of having orders ready to pick-up here at church beginning Wednesday, March 14th. Order forms are available in the Narthex and are due back by February 11.

“Some changes look negative on the surface but you will soon realize that space is being created in your life for something new to emerge.”

- Eckhart Tolle

## ***Faith FULFILLED...***

Just in case you missed the following in the bulletin on Sunday morning, Jan. 14th:

### **Fulfilling the Faith for 2017**

**YTD \$34,189    YTD Due \$33,011    YTD Short +1178\***

**We made it!** Thank you so much for your dedication to paying off the Fulfilling the Faith mortgage on time and to reimbursing the general fund the money used to fulfill our obligation. You have shown tremendous dedication to this project which helped increase First Bethel's accessibility and provided many new rooms to enhance ministry.



This was an incredible Christmas gift, because in doing this, we've truly FULFILLED the Faith placed in us by the congregation here at First Bethel in 2001 when we started this capital campaign. However, this gift comes with a challenge. Now we need to maintain the renovated space so we can be about the work of "Building the Faith." Let's pay this gift forward so "those who come behind us will, indeed, Find Us Faithful!"

(\* In case you're wondering what will happen to the "extra" funds contributed, the donors will be individually contacted for permission to transfer the funds to "Building the Faith.")

## ***Martha Circle News!***

The next meeting of our women's group, the Martha Circle, will be Wednesday February 14 at 7:00 pm in the Susanna Wesley Room. New prayer partners will be selected. This date is also Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent.

- Donna Hennen

## **Ash Wednesday – February 14**

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 – Drive-Thru Ashes** – Ashes and free coffee will be offered "drive-thru style" in our parking lot. If you can't make it to church this Ash Wednesday, come visit for a moment of grace.

**7:30 pm – A Worship Service of Remembrance** in the sanctuary. Scripture, music, and an opportunity to begin Lent with your family of faith.

## ***Save the dates for ASP Bistros!***

**What:** Delicious dinners held during **SUNDAYS IN LENT** as fundraisers for our Appalachia Service Project summer mission trip. (*Please note the change of day and times for the Bistros*)



**How:** All the food and preparation time is donated by many of our church's ASP supporters; otherwise it doesn't work. Our diners receive a homemade meal lovingly prepared and served during this time of fellowship. We encourage our patrons to give generously as they are able, keeping in mind what a similar meal might cost at a restaurant - but there's no comparison.

**Who:** All are welcome to enjoy meals made with love. The menu changes weekly, and kid-friendly and gluten free options are available.

**When:** **4:30PM-6:30PM** on the following **SUNDAY** evenings:  
**February 18, 25, March 4, 11 and 18**

**Where:** Suzanna Wesley Room of First Bethel Church

All proceeds benefit our **ASP** mission trip on June 17-23, 2018 and we need your help!

# **Library News**

*Among our new arrivals so far in 2018 are:*

## **I Love Growing Older, But I'll Never Grow Old**

The author, *J. Ellsworth Kalas*, who was a longtime United Methodist pastor, said this book is for people “who are wise enough to laugh at much of what they see, especially themselves.” He said people are often preoccupied with “getting, spending, hurrying and achieving” and take little time to think about where their lives are going. His advice covers 138 pages, followed by a 15-page discussion guide used by many church study groups. *Christianbooks.com* said Kalas offers “a fresh perspective on how to mature with joy, grace and contentment.” This is one of dozens of books by the author, who in his later years joined the *Asbury Theological Academy*, a multi-dimensional graduate school, and became its president. Kalas died in 2015. He was 92.



## **White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America**

This book examines the long and troubled history of white poverty in the United States, and challenges “our comforting myths about equality.” The 321-page volume published in 2016 has been praised by many reviewers -- and criticized by some with differing political views. The *New York Times* said it “will have you squirming in your chair.” The author is *Nancy Isenberg*, a professor of history at Louisiana State University. Isenberg writes, “The discomfort that middle-class Americans feel when forced to acknowledge the existence of poverty highlights the disconnect between image and reality.” You may wish to read this book in conjunction with another in the Library: **Hillbilly Elegy** by *J.D. Vance*.

*We wish to thank so many of you who have helped our Library grow. Seventy books were added to the shelves in 2017 – another very good year.*

**--Your Library Staff --**



## Call to Action

by Gloria Stephan

ASP has announced their 2018 theme based on **Isaiah 6:8**: Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, **“Here am I; send me!”**

This year's ASP theme is an expression of purpose, service, and invitation to participate in God's ongoing work in the world. God sends out the call, and God's people are the called. We are called to stand with those who are hurting and struggling. We are called to speak on behalf of those who do not have a voice. We are called to serve all people “right where they are, just the way they are.”

Appalachia Service Project is celebrating 50 years of answering the call to serve among the people of Central Appalachia with humility and enthusiasm in the same way that Isaiah answered the call from God to serve in his time and place. We are excited to see how God continues to call us into our future together!



First Bethel's ASP trip is scheduled for Sunday, June 17 – Saturday, June 23.

**Registrations are due by February 4.** Forms are available in the church narthex and on the church website. For more information, contact me at [gstephan57@gmail.com](mailto:gstephan57@gmail.com) or see the ASP website at [www.ASPHome.org](http://www.ASPHome.org).

Will you answer the call?

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**CONFIRMATION CLASS!** This year we will be offering Confirmation Class to all young people in grades 7 & 8. This is an important step in their faith development as they ask important questions and make decisions about what they believe.



Field trips will include a visit to meet Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi, a day at Camp Allegheny, and visits to other houses of worship to experience the variety of worship styles and faiths. See Pastor Tom now. **A parent meeting will be held between services on Sunday Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> at 10:15 a.m.**

**Kings School Kids**

**Preschool**  
**News**

**Registration**

**Is Going On Now For The**



**2018-2019**

**School Year**

**Please contact the**

**Kings School Kids Office at**

**412-835-6141**

**For More Information**

**Hurry!!!**

**Classes Fill Fast**





**MARDI  
GRAS**



Life is too Short!

Join the Fun on

Fat Tuesday

February 13th

7:00 pm

Bring a Finger Food to share

(snack, appetizer or dessert)

and enjoy an evening of

Fun & Fellowship



Sign up in the  
Narthex



or call 412-835-6141

To make your reservations!!!!

## ***Renewal Needed?***

“My neighbor’s material needs are my spiritual needs,” said 19th-century theologian Israel Salanter. In other words, when someone else suffers hunger and poverty, when people endure a natural disaster and lack shelter, when another human being is sick or injured — in all such cases, God calls us to action. And God knows that whatever we do to meet those material needs will meet our spiritual needs at the same time.

It might be our spiritual need to expand our horizons into neighborhoods, cultures or situations where we’re uncomfortable. We might need to grow in love for people different from us. By serving others, we might find our own sagging spirits nurtured with a sense of well-being or even joy. And as we reach out to help, surely we’ll notice others doing the same thing, and our spiritual need for renewed faith will be met.

## ***Souper Bowl Will Help the Hungry!***

Well, the Steelers are, once again, sitting at home on Super Bowl Sunday wondering “what might have been...” But that doesn’t mean you have to!

**On Super Bowl Sunday, Feb 4, the Outreach Committee of First Bethel Church will be collecting cans of soup for SHIM, the South Hills Interfaith Movement.** Just bring ‘em to worship and we’ll do the rest!

Last year we had quite the collection which went to stock SHIM’s Food Pantry which helps hundreds of men, women and children in our communities. Let’s see if we can collect even more this year!



## ***A Fork in the Road***

According to that great font of wisdom, Yogi Berra, "If you come to a fork in the road, take it." The Gospel of Mark's 8<sup>th</sup> chapter is a kind of theological fork in the road.

This chapter is the hinge of Mark's gospel. Not only is this the exact middle of Mark in terms of chapters and verses, it is also theologically the center point at which the ministry of Jesus takes a decisive turn toward the cross.

An excellent Bible scholar advised me once to pay close attention to what comes in the middle of a parable, story, or even a gospel. This chapter is no exception.

Jesus seems to know what he is doing and also where he is going (or, better said, where he must go whether he wants to go that direction or not). For the disciples, however, the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of Mark does present a kind of fork in the road. And like Yogi Berra, as they look at the fork in the road, they want to take it.

They want it both ways. They want to stick with Jesus and be his followers while at the same time insisting that Jesus follow them down the path they want to take.

What does this mean to you and me? Well, that's for us to answer individually, but I suspect it would be good to ask ourselves if we, too, want it both ways – to follow Jesus where it's convenient and easy, and to make Jesus follow us when it's not.

*- Pastor Tom*

### **2018 OFFERING ENVELOPES**

Please pick up your 2018 offering envelopes this week and help the church save on postage. You'll find your new envelopes in the Narthex. Thanks!



## **Taize Prayer Service**

Since the years following World War 2 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.

But you don't have to travel to Europe to experience this unique and intimate expression of faith. First Bethel Church offers a Taize Prayer Service on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. In the softly candlelit sanctuary, those who gather will have opportunities to experience the presence of God through meditative music, Scripture readings and moments of silence and reflection.

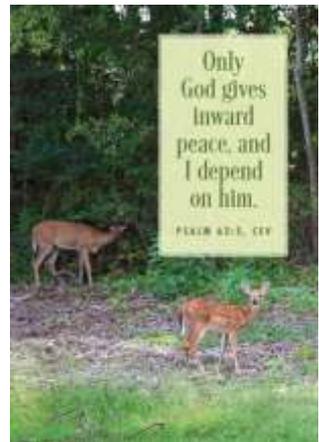


The Taizé service is a wonderful way to experience the inner stillness and peace our lives so often crave. There's no sermon or offering taken – rather it seeks to create a place of peace within our hearts for God to dwell and speak. All are invited – Wednesday, February 21, 7:30 pm!

## ***The source of wars***

The modern soul which cannot live with itself cannot live with its fellow men. A man who is not at peace with himself will not be at peace with his brother. World wars are nothing but macrocosmic signs of the psychic wars waging inside microcosmic muddled souls. If there had not already been battles in millions of hearts, there would be none on the battlefields of the world.

—Bishop Fulton J. Sheen



## ***2017 Church Conference Goals***

In November, our Church approved a series of goals at the direction of Bishop Cynthia More-Koiki. In these early months of 2018 the King's Light will share those goals with those unable to attend the meeting. These are the first two categories:

### **Creating new places for new people by starting new congregations and renewing existing ones**

Short Term: By year end 2018, host a monthly open microphone night via a coffeehouse atmosphere to build awareness of our church and community relationship in an effect to increase membership.

By year end 2019, First Bethel United Methodist Church will offer live and archived streaming worship sessions via the web.

Med. Term: By year end 2023, begin satellite ministries that could include worship, children's education, and adult activities within an underserved population of our local communities.

Long Term: By year end of 2027, First Bethel United Methodist Church will begin an annual "Mission Week" focus whereby 50 people will engage in a variety of different ministries projects outside of the church.

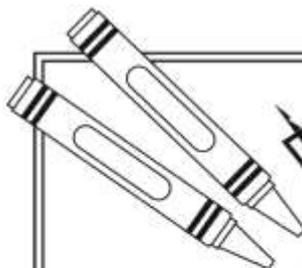
### **Stamping out killer diseases by improving health globally.**

Short Term: In 2018, begin hosting a blood drive with a minimum of 30 donors.

Med. Term: In 2021, begin increasing the number of blood drive donor participants by 50% annually.

Long Term: By 2024, annual blood drive participation to reach 100 donors and begin hosting a health fair during drive.

By 2024, be able to contribute 0.25% of annual church budget to UMCOR with a planned annual increase of 0.5% per year.



# PUZZLE

## FOLLOW GOD'S EXAMPLE

In a letter to the church in Colossae, the apostle Paul wrote about the importance of forgiveness.

### • • • • DIRECTIONS • • • •

To complete Colossians 3:13 (NIV), use the smaller words to fill in the larger words.



gain as or ear van an for give  
gave her on it one other he an a

B \_\_\_\_\_ w \_\_\_\_\_ h each  
 ot \_\_\_\_\_ d \_\_\_\_\_ give  
 \_\_\_\_\_ e an \_\_\_\_\_ if \_\_\_\_\_ y  
 of you h \_\_\_\_\_ grie \_\_\_\_\_ ce  
 a \_\_\_\_\_ st some \_\_\_\_\_ .  
 For \_\_\_\_\_ as t \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_ d  
 for \_\_\_\_\_ you.”

COLOSSIANS 3:13, NIV

Answers: "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."  
Colossians 3:13, NIV