

The Pastor's Notebook

Well, he's done it again. Peter thought he knew better and attempted to correct Jesus when he says shocking words to the disciples. Listen to Mark's words,

“Jesus then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

Peter admonishes Jesus for talking about the necessity of suffering and dying, thinking self-preservation is the only necessity worthy of Jesus' agenda. Jesus was not amused and was angry enough to call him “Satan,” the Adversary.

Why does Peter want to prove Jesus wrong? It's because he slipped into the conventional wisdom that fulfilling one's own priorities, looking out for one's own success is the road to fullness of life. But frankly, wisdom is seldom conventional. Peter just couldn't wrap his mind around Jesus' words:

“For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.”

What Jesus is saying is that there is usually more to life than we think. When we look only to ourselves we're thinking small, because neither you or I are the center of the universe. Most astronomers say that the universe has no physical center because of its curvature. The only possible center therefore is spiritual. We Christians call that Jesus Christ.

Friends, we need to again take our rightful position, not as the center, but as part of the whole.

This Lent, more than giving up candy or cake, let's deny our false position in the scheme of things. For a start, this week, let's decide to do something for someone else, with no reward in mind.



FROM OUR
PASTOR

There are people in pain in our midst, filled with profound grief and sorrow – let’s put our priorities and our preferences behind us, remember Jesus’ words, care for them in Jesus name, and discover life we never knew we were missing.

There’s someone lonely or hurting out there waiting for us. If the road to that person seems hard, don’t worry. Know that Jesus calls us from beyond our comfort zone, and is there lonely and hurting in that person.

Rather than here try to explain how we save our life by losing it, let’s just do it, and experience our own lives risen and blessed by Christ himself.

God bless you!

- Tom

Outreach Awareness!

The Outreach committee would like to thank the people of FBUMC for helping make our first two projects a success. The last Sunday of January we made 3 beautiful fleece tie blankets to be given to someone in need. They will help keep someone warm this winter and remind them that they too are a child of God and are loved. With many hands tying knots they were completed in about 45 minutes.

Our second project was the soup drive for Super Bowl Sunday and it too was a huge success. We collected over 200 pounds of soup that was taken to SHIM. That food stays in the South Hills area and helps to feed the 1600 people that visit their three food pantries. We also collected \$15.00 which was given to SHIM. SHIM purchases items from the Pittsburgh Community Food Bank where their buying power is 500% greater than purchasing food at supermarket prices.

Stay tuned for we have a few more new projects coming up that we think you will be interested in helping out with.

Our next Daily Bread is March 4.

“Don’t start looking in the Bible for the answers it gives. Start by listening for the questions it asks.”

- Frederick Buechner

Library News

Our Library has recently added many new books for young and not so young readers. Here are just a few for your review:

HERE WE ARE: Notes for Living on Planet Earth

Our young readers (parents, too) will be fascinated by this colorful and educational book by internationally acclaimed illustrator *Oliver Jeffers*. It's new -- and it's delightful. One reviewer wrote: "The lessons and message within are beautiful. They need to be included in every young child's experience." The drawings, accompanied by notes, show the sky and Earth in relation to other planets. They feature mountains, the sea, animals, cities and people from around the world, with this message: "We may all look different, act different and sound different ... but don't be fooled, we are all people." The Emmy-winning Jeffers was born in Australia, grew up in Northern Ireland and now lives in Brooklyn, N.Y. This is one of the latest additions in our Library, which has a treasury of children's books.

LARGE PRINT – A new section in the Library

We now have a shelf marked *Large Print*. There are a dozen books, including these two best-sellers donated in the memory of our beloved *Don Barth*:

Flags of Our Fathers -- The stories of six U.S. Marines who raised the flag at the battle of Iwo Jima in World War II. By *James Bradley* and *Ron Powers*.

The Underground Railroad – A *Pulitzer Prize*-winner about two slaves who flee a Georgia cotton plantation in a desperate bid for freedom. By *Colson Whitehead*.

Happy Reading!

Your Library Staff



ASP Bistros!

By Gloria Stephan

What has changed is that ASP Bistros have moved to Sunday nights during Lent. What won't change is the amazing support of the ASP ministry that happens around these fundraising dinners. You'll see folks of all ages working together to prepare delicious homemade meals, lovingly served in hopes of collecting generous donations to offset costs of our June 17 trip to Appalachia. The menu usually includes gluten-free and kid-friendly options, and always ends with delicious desserts.



See the signup sheets or let us know how you can help. We hope you'll join us!

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18 - YOU HAD ME AT PASTA

SPONSORED BY THE ASP VOLUNTEERS

Penne Pasta with choice of sauce

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25 – SUNNY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATLOAF

SPONSORED THE PARENTS DINNER GROUP

Meatloaf ♦ Potatoes ♦ Green Beans

SUNDAY, MARCH 4 - YES MA'AM, HAM PLEASE

SPONSORED BY FIRST BETHEL LADIES AND MARTHA CIRCLE

Ham ♦ Cheesy Potatoes ♦ Carrots

SUNDAY, MARCH 11 - DO – RE – MI – FA -SOL – LA.....SAGNA !

SPONSORED BY MUSIC MINISTRIES

Various varieties of Lasagna

SUNDAY, MARCH 18 - GOT BEEF?

SPONSORED BY MEN'S MINISTRY GROUP

Roast Beef ♦ Potatoes ♦ Vegetable



Bright and Happy Easter Blessings!

What a special day to remember
just how much Jesus Loves Us!



Join Us On

March 31st from 11:30 to 12:30



For Our Easter Festival.



Activities, Stories, Crafts, Pizza Lunch,

Egg Hunt & So Much More!!!!

Please RSVP By March 25th

To Miss Lynda at 412-835-6141



Happy Easter

Book Club Notes!

There's plenty to read and discuss with the next 2 months of Book Club selections! Take a look, get a book, and join us!

March 16 @ 7:30PM

**The Boys in the Bunkhouse
by Dan Barry**

With this Dickensian tale from America's heartland, New York Times writer and columnist Dan Barry tells the harrowing yet uplifting story of the exploitation and abuse of a resilient group of men with intellectual disability, and the heroic efforts of those who helped them to find justice and reclaim their lives.

April 20 @ 7:30PM

**A Bigger Table
by John Pavlovitz**

Pastor John Pavlovitz invites readers to join him on the journey to find or build a church that is big enough for everyone. How can we extend unconditional welcome and acceptance in a world increasingly marked by bigotry, fear, and exclusion?

We usually meet at Panera Bread in South Park Shops the third Friday of the month. There are some scheduling conflicts for Panera's back room, so we may be meeting in the back of the main restaurant area.



In June, July and August we plan to meet on the third Thursday of the month.

Why Palm Sunday?

Palm branches are mentioned in only one of the four Gospels (see John 12:12-15). So why do we call the first day of Holy Week Palm Sunday?



Tradition plays an important part in church history. During Jesus' time, Rome was the world's leading power. Whenever the Romans were victorious in battle, citizens traditionally threw palm branches in the returning heroes' path.

This was the accepted custom of reception. So when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, it was appropriate that he receive a hero's welcome. One week later, he would be victorious over death.

Who Needs God?

Maybe a better question is, “Who DOESN’T need God? If you’re like most folks, you have probably looked toward the heavens, or sought through deep introspection, the presence of God. Who hasn’t felt a need for God in their lives?

Sometimes God can be found in a sunset and other times on the beach during an early morning walk. Sometimes God’s embrace can be felt in a beautiful piece of music and other times in the stillness of a quiet, candlelit sanctuary.



First Bethel Church offers an opportunity to experience God’s love the way millions have done over the years and down through the ages.

Reclaiming some of the patterns of worship that brought hope, vitality and peace to Christians for hundreds of years, we invite you to our Taize Prayer Service on the 3rd 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, March 21, 7:30 pm!



A true friend knows your weaknesses but shows you your strengths; feels your fears but fortifies your faith; sees your anxieties but frees your spirit; recognizes your disabilities but emphasizes your possibilities.

- William Arthur Ward

Maundy Thursday Seder Meal

Boruch Haba! With those words we will begin a traditional Jewish Passover Seder on **Maundy Thursday, March 29 at 6:30 p.m.**, sharing the meal Jesus shared with his disciples in the Upper Room.



About this holiday, it is written: "And you shall tell your child in that day, saying: It is because of that which was done...when I came forth out of Egypt."

Seder Meal

We will gather together as a family of families to remember the bondage of our ancestors, so that we, as sons and daughters, may be inspired to cherish the freedom we now have, to recognize the bondage of those who are not yet free, and to encourage our daughters and sons to help in the struggle to free all men and women. On this evening, the bond of love and family will reach out from this gathering to unite us with all believers in remembering and in hope.

We are an old people; our history reaches back over 4000 years. In that history, our forebears have seen bondage and freedom, trial and triumph, high achievements and terrible disasters. Through it all God delivered the people and God's mission continued. Celebrate the power and love of God!

Contact the church office at 412-835-0700 to make your reservations. Seating will be limited so call early and make this a powerful experience for your entire family.

Good Friday Tenebrae Service

Shadows. Good Friday is all about the gathering of shadows around the one we know of as the Light of the World. On one of the most poignant days of the year, we'll join Jesus as he walks into the shadows for the sake of us all. Be with us on **Good Friday evening, March 30 at 7:30 p.m.** for our Tenebrae Service as we remember Jesus' last hours and the love which led him to the cross. Retrace his steps, remember his passion, and resolve to keep a faithful watch. Easter Sunday is all the brighter for having walked with Jesus on this sacred night.



Easter Sunrise Service!



Celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ in a splendid Easter Sunrise Service on the lawn of First Bethel Church!

Gather as we did last year, on **Sunday April 1 at 6:30 a.m.** for music, fellowship and the joy of a new and glorious day! There is plenty of parking, no hills, no long walks and all of the anticipation

Easter brings forth. Join us as we experience the good news, "Christ is Risen!" If it rains we will gather in the sanctuary.

Easter Sunday in the Sanctuary!

Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! The ancient declaration will resound through the sanctuary of First Bethel Church once again this year! Easter Sunday worship in the sanctuary of First Bethel Church is a singularly beautiful and glorious experience! Come and share the exciting news of Jesus' resurrection with family and friends on **Sunday April 1 at 9 and 11 a.m.** There will be beautiful music, stunning Easter flowers, and the age-old story of God's love that cannot be contained, even by death!



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 happening at the church!



There's a 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 **FIRST SATURDAY of every month at 8 a.m.** in Founders Hall. There's a program, discussion, refreshments, and an opportunity to join other men in serving God and our neighbors. Hope to see you there! See Ken Williams or John Brevard for more information!

Ash Wednesday Outdoors!

What was happening in the church parking lot on Ash Wednesday from 1 a.m. to 1 p.m.? It was “Ash & Dash,” otherwise known as “Drive-Thru Ashes!” Cars of people entered the lot, made their way to the pastor’s station where they received ashes, a devotional guide, complimentary coffee, tea, or water, and a warm invitation to join us on Sunday mornings.

Unlike last year when we gave ashes to a small group of people in the sanctuary, this year we gave ashes to 33 people! Twenty of those people had absolutely no connection to our church.



Heard a number of times were stories of people caring for children as well as aged parents, who also worked full time, and who thought they wouldn’t be able to find the time to begin Lent in a meaningful way, with ashes. They were delighted to discover that First Bethel Church was, as one person put it, “out where the people are.”

With a great beginning this year, look for “Ash & Dash” to be serving the church and community again next year!

“Jesus’s resurrection is the beginning of God’s new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven. That, after all, is what the Lord’s Prayer is about.”

- *N.T. Wright*

Make the Common Sacred

First Corinthians 10:31 reminds us, “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Author E.M. Bounds describes this mind-set as a “spirit of devotion” that “puts God in all things ... not merely in our praying and churchgoing.”

He writes: “The spirit of devotion makes the common things of earth sacred and the little things great. With this spirit of devotion, we go to business on Monday directed by the very same influence, and inspired by the same influences, by which we went to church on Sunday. The spirit of devotion makes a Sabbath out of Saturday and transforms the shop and the office into a temple of God.”

New Study Coming!

Living the Questions 2.0, a highly-acclaimed study of the Bible, offers an alternative to programs that provide participants all the answers. LtQ strives to create an open-minded environment for interacting with one another in exploring Christianity. Video presenters include: Diana Butler Bass, Brian McLaren, John Bell, Amy-Jill Levine & Marcus Borg!

Our first series, “Invitation to Journey,” begins April 4 from 6:30-7:30 pm and will run 7 weeks. Topics will include:

- * Invitation to Journey
- * Taking the Bible Seriously
- * Stories of Creation
- * Thinking Theologically
- * Lives of Jesus
- * A Passion for Christ: Paul
- * Out into the World



If believing in the literal interpretation of the Bible is essential to your faith this study will challenge you, but don't let that stop you. Everyone is welcome! Sign up in the Narthex or call 412-835-0700.

Wednesday Morning Bible Study!



Would you like to get a jump on the scripture reading for the upcoming Sunday service? There's a place for YOU! Weather permitting, our Scripture Study Group will meet Wednesdays at 9:45 AM in the Oxford Room. Dig into the background of the reading and uncover interesting facts and meaning you may have overlooked. Everyone is welcome! If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie Alstadt or call the church office at 412-835-0700.

If you had been living in the Roman Empire in the first century, you would have noticed a strange custom practiced by the Christians. They would go out to their graveyards with laurel wreaths, the wreaths that had been used in Greek and Roman culture to crown the victors of athletic contests. They would take those laurel wreaths and place them on the graves. If you had asked them why, they would say, "Because we believe that in Jesus Christ we have received victory over the power of death."

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.

This month we present 2 more goals:

THE BISHOP'S EMPHASIS ON CAMPING MINISTRIES

The people of the First Bethel United Methodist Church clearly understand the importance of camping ministries in the faith development of our children and teenagers. It is at this pivotal time in their lives that a deepening of faith is possible and life-changing. To that end, First Bethel Church commits itself to supporting vital camping ministries including:

- a) Encouraging more young people to participate in camping at Jumonville, Camp Allegheny or Wesley Woods,
- b) Providing scholarships to interested children or teens through church fund-raising and/or sponsorships
- c) Raising funds through a variety of efforts to support Conference Camps directly, in a manner similar to "Imagine No Malaria."

DISMANTLING RACISM

Short Term:

- a) Increase participation 25% by year end 2018, in the existing Dismantling Racism Team.
- b) Completing on a quarterly basis by year end of 2019, watch and discuss a series of films that highlight racial struggles. Films may include, but not limited to, "Selma," "The Great Debaters," "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," "The Butler," "Brother Outsider," and "Invictus."

Medium Term:

By year end 2021, form a musical ensemble with members of a church whose members are predominantly people of color that offers performances at both churches.

Long Term:

By 2024, establishing a trusting relationship with above church and jointly host a study and discussion on relevant issues together.

Holy Week Is Coming!

Mark your calendars for a week of drama, sacrifice, and victory!

- **Palm Sunday** – March 25, 9 & 11 a.m.
- **Maundy Thursday** – A Seder Together, March 29, 6:30 p.m. Due to limited seating, reservations are necessary. Sign up in the Narthex.
- **Good Friday** – Service of Darkness – Tenebrae, March 30, 7:30 p.m.
- **Easter Sunrise** – Outside on the church lawn, April 1 at 6:30 a.m.
- **Easter Sanctuary Worship** – April 1, 9 & 11 a.m.

Meadowcrest Nursing Center Ministry

Did you know we have a regularly-scheduled worship service at a local nursing center?

First Bethel serves the residents and staff of the Meadowcrest Nursing Center on Braun Road in Bethel Park. Plan to join us for a **special Holy Week service on March 28 at 3:00 pm** as we sing songs of faith, listen to the stories and needs of the residents, and offer a word of strength and hope.

In addition, this month we will offer communion to those who desire it as well. Come and share the victorious story of Jesus Christ with our neighbors during this special week!

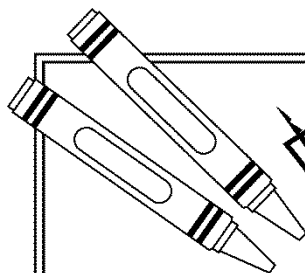


Several years ago, The Saturday Evening Post ran a cartoon showing a man about to be rescued after he had spent a long time ship-wrecked on a tiny deserted island. The sailor in charge of the rescue team stepped onto the beach and handed the man a stack of newspapers.

"Compliments of the Captain," the sailor said. "He would like you to glance at the headlines to see if you'd still like to be rescued!"

Sometimes the headlines do scare us. Sometimes we feel that evil is winning, but then along comes Easter, to remind us that there is no grave deep enough, no seal imposing enough, no stone heavy enough, no evil strong enough to keep Christ in the grave.

- James W. Moore













PUZZLE







Spring's Beauty






During springtime, the beauty of God's creation emerges in many ways.

Directions: Use the vowel code below to complete Psalm 8:1, NIV.



A =  E =  I =  O =  U = 

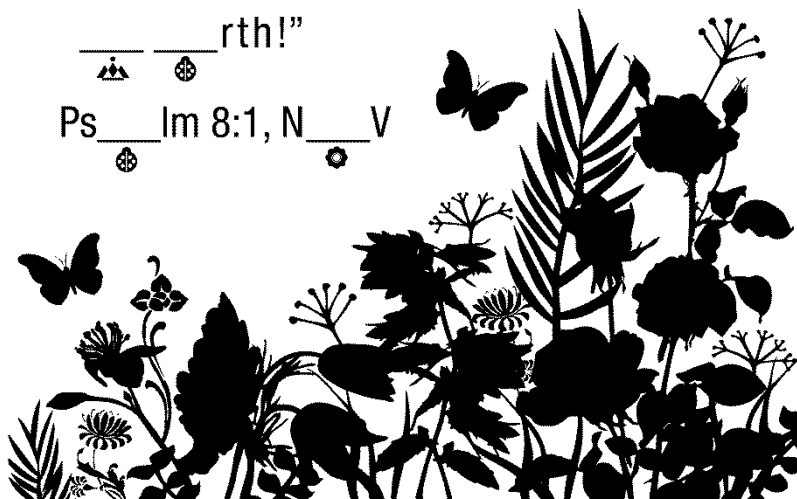
"L__RD, __ __ r L__rd, h__w
    

m__j__st__c __s y__ __r
     

n__m__ __n __ll th__
    

__ __rth!"
 

Ps __lm 8:1, N__V
 



Answer: "LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"
Psalm 8:1, NIV