

The Pastor's Notebook

As you know I love baseball, but some decisions by the Pirates during the off-season had me frustrated. I was so discouraged that I considered rooting for a DIFFERENT TEAM for the first time in my life. I chose the Kansas City Royals because I have friends who live there and they have really cool uniforms. (I know, that's really shallow)

Anyway, I tried pulling for the Royals but it wasn't long before I was checking the TV sports reports on the Buccos and digging through some websites for baseball fanatics. For 61 years I have been a Pirates fan and I just didn't like giving it up and joining the fan base of another team. It just felt wrong.

It wasn't who I really was and I quickly returned "home".

I was thinking of this experience as I was reading passages from the book of Hebrews. In particular these verses from chapter 10:

*Do not, therefore, abandon that confidence of yours; it brings a great reward. For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet "in a very little while, the one who is coming will come and will not delay; but my righteous one will live by faith. My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back." **But we are not among those who shrink back and so are lost, but among those who have faith and so are saved.***

These words are words of encouragement. It reminds us of what team we are on. We aren't the type of people who fall away when things get tough. We are the type of people who trust in God. It's been that way since 1947 and will be the hallmark of the faithful at First Bethel as we embrace the future. Don't let the challenges of today frighten you – the faithful trust God EVEN when the challenges are daunting.

Yes, we face some mighty obstacles to the peaceful and just world God wills. School shootings, instability in the world, discontent among our fellow citizens, and even soul-deep struggles within the United Methodist Church unsettle our spirits and grieve our hearts. But let's not forget - we have seen evidence of God's love and faithfulness in our lives and we hold on to that.

Don't shrink back or fall into hopelessness. Pick the right team! Choose Jesus and then be more than a casual fan. Go all in and know that when the game is over and the score is tallied up, "The wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on earth, good-will to men." (*I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*)

God bless you always!

Tom

Words for Today...from 1968

For America, this marks the 50th anniversary of a turbulent year, which included high-profile assassinations, the Vietnam War and civil rights protests. Five decades on, turmoil still abounds. May we take hope and inspiration from Robert Kennedy, who, on the night of Martin Luther King's death, replaced a presidential-campaign speech with these words:

"What we need in the United States is not division; ... not hatred; ... not violence and lawlessness, but ... love, and wisdom, and compassion toward one another; and a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer within our country, whether they be white or ... black."

Kennedy added: *"We will have difficult times in the future. ... But the vast majority of white people and ... black people in this country want to live together ... and want justice for all human beings. ... Let's dedicate ourselves ... to tame the savageness of man and make gentle the life of this world ... and say a prayer for our country and for our people."*

Summer Worship Schedule

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

Beginning **June 3 thru September 2** we will join together for one Sunday worship service at **10:00 a.m.**

The Adult Study group, **FaithLink**, will gather at 9:00 a.m.

For those who like to get an early start on their day we will offer casual, **OUTDOOR worship at 9 a.m.** in the Hillside Worship Center. If raining, we will meet in the Susanna Wesley Room

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!



Church Picnic!

September 23th 4:00 p.m.



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

Congratulations!

On Thursday May 17 Heather and Ryan Melber welcomed their newborn son to the world! Samuel Joseph Melber was born at 5:03 a.m., weighs 7 pounds 4 ounces and is 19 inches long. The people of First Bethel offer prayers of blessings upon the Melber family and their new gift from God!



What Does God Want Us to Know about Money?

Well, it's something that John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church thought about a lot. Here's the condensed version of his theology of money:

GAIN ALL YOU CAN—An honest day's work deserves an honest day's pay. The ability and opportunity to work and earn a living is a gift from God.

SAVE ALL YOU CAN – As good stewards we should spend carefully. We should always prayerfully consider what we need versus what we want.

GIVE ALL YOU CAN – Once we've met our needs, we should give freely, as God has given to us. Remember our gifts are not limited to money—our time and talents make a difference.

This is based on a very nice, short video by UMC Giving. You can find it by searching the title on Youtube. Incidentally, our giving helps support this ministry!

No, we're NOT paving Paradise, but....*

You don't have to be an asphalt expert to know that part of the lower parking lot, the ramp to the upper lot AND the upper lot definitely NEED a lot of work! Bids are in and work will hopefully begin soon.

There are some funds available, but not enough to pay for these much-needed repairs. So please consider giving to the "Parking Lot Fund."



*(*Bonus points for anyone UNDER 50 that gets the reference!)*

Book Club Notes

We will meet Thursday, June 14th, at 7:30 p.m. at Panera's, South Park Shops and discuss "A Gentleman in Moscow" by Amor Towles

"*A Gentleman in Moscow* is the utterly entertaining second novel from the author of *Rules of Civility*. Amor Towles skillfully transports us to The Metropol, the famed Moscow hotel where movie stars and Russian royalty hobnob, where Bolsheviks plot revolutions and intellectuals discuss the merits of contemporary Russian writers, where spies spy, thieves steal and the danger of twentieth century Russia lurks outside its marbled walls. It's also where wealthy Count Alexander Rostov lives under house arrest for a poem deemed incendiary by the Bolsheviks, and meets Nina. Nina is a precocious and wide-eyed young girl who holds the keys to the entire hotel, wonders what it means to be a princess, and will irrevocably change his life. Despite being confined to the hallway of the hotel, the Count lives an absorbing, adventure-filled existence, filled with capers, conspiracies and culture. Alexander Rostov is a character for the ages--like Kay Thompson's Eloise and Wes Anderson's M. Gustav, he is unflinchingly (and hilariously for readers) devoted to his station, even when forced to wait tables, play hide and seek with a young girl, or confront communism. Towles magnificently conjures the grandeur of the Russian hotel and the vibrancy of the characters that call it home." --Al Woodworth, *The Amazon Book Review*



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.

Men's Fellowship Has a Great Month!

May has been an outstanding month for the Men's Fellowship of First Bethel Church! First, on May 6th they held a garage sale thanks to the many donations from people at the church. This sale resulted in \$2,500 for ministry needs at First Bethel. Then, on May 19th they hosted the Bell-Art Ensemble for an outstanding concert in the sanctuary! We are grateful to all those who made these events a huge success!



And they're off!

by Gloria Stephan

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!" (Isaiah 6:8)

In this season of horse racing, hearing the phrase "And they're off" reminded me that it takes a year or more to prepare for a single week on ASP. Many hands and hearts contribute time and talents to make one week of service possible.

Think about the number of people and the resources it takes to identify and prepare a horse for a race lasting only a few minutes. Once out of the gate, it's completely up to the horse and the jockey to navigate the conditions and circumstances that lie between them and their goal. As prepared and determined as they may be, they never quite know what to expect, or how they'll react. They strive to work as a team, counting on common purpose and skill to finish the race, but the outcome is never certain.

When we are called to action, we do not go alone. When the ASP volunteers head out for **Clay County, West Virginia on June 17** with the rental vans packed to the roof, they go as individuals who have been called, groomed, prepared, and sent out to serve. They go with the support and blessings of others that may not be on the trip. They go not really knowing what to expect, even if it's not their first mission trip.

The thing to remember is that once we answer the call to action, we do not need to rely only on our own knowledge or skills. God has called us, and God is with us. God has sent us out, and God will not leave us. Each person answers the call with different expectations, and each experience is different. No matter what, God is with each of us, all the way.

Please keep our **ASP volunteers** in prayer, with a special shout out to our seven first timers*: Jennifer Antonoplos*, Wil Challingsworth, Shane Danahey, Lisa DiGorio, Mia Fraps*, Claire Garfold, Jaime,

Robin, Regan and Kadin Gray, Phil Himmler, George Karpacs*, Sarah Kobylinski*, Lisa McDermot, Corey, Charlene*, James and Julia* Pauline, Robert Pugh II*, Amy Scott, Gloria Stephan, Donna and Lacey Stewart.

For more information on Clay County, see <https://www.facebook.com/ASPClayWV>

Blood Drive Coming on Sunday July 15

Recently I read Kaila's very moving story and I thought it might touch your heart as well:

*My little brother was diagnosed with Hodgkins Lymphoma when I was 13 years old. I couldn't do much to help him then but I can help those who need blood now. My brother is doing well and has been in remission for nine years. Because of his treatment, he can't donate but I can, and do, continue to donate. By donating double reds as often as I can I feel like I am doing my part to help others become well. **With every donation I get to help save someone's life. Please join me in donating!***



Representative from Central Blood Bank will be at First Bethel Church on Sunday July 15 from 8:00 a.m. to 1 pm in the Susanna Wesley Room to receive life-saving donations. Plan to help your neighbor during the summer, the time of greatest need for Central Blood Bank. Call 412-835-0700 for more information!

Have you ever realized that you can give things to God that are of value to him? Or are you just sitting around daydreaming about the greatness of his redemption, while neglecting all the things you could be doing for him? I'm not referring to works which could be regarded as divine and miraculous, but ordinary, simple human things — things which would be evidence to God that you are totally surrendered to him.

- Oswald Chambers

Library News – Discovering Your True Identity

SHAKEN -- On Jan. 8, 2012, Denver's *Tim Tebow* threw a touchdown pass on the first play of overtime that Pittsburgh fans would like to forget. The TD knocked the favored Steelers out of the playoffs, and at that moment Tebow, who had won the *Heisman Trophy* in college, seemed to be at the top of the football world. But major career disappointments were to come, including short stints with the *New York Jets* and *New England Patriots*.



In this best-seller, Tebow writes: "*Was my identity found in those highs when we were making a playoff run? No. Was my identity found a year later when I was being let go? No. I was excited, proud, happy, disappointed and sad at times, but that's not what made me-- that's not who I was and that's not who I am. The world doesn't get to define you because God already did that.*"

Shaken, which has the subtitle **Discovering Your True Identity in the Midst of Life's Storms**, won the 2017 *Christian Book of the Year* award. It was purchased with a donation from a church member in memory of Leonard Moore, who loved sports.

Tim Tebow, 30, is now a pro *baseball* player in the New York Mets organization. We hope you enjoy this inspirational book, which joins many other sports favorites in our Library. Among them are **The Blind Side**, **Nobody's Perfect**, **Men of Sunday**, **Quiet Strength** and this one for all *Pirates* fans: **The Best Game Ever**.

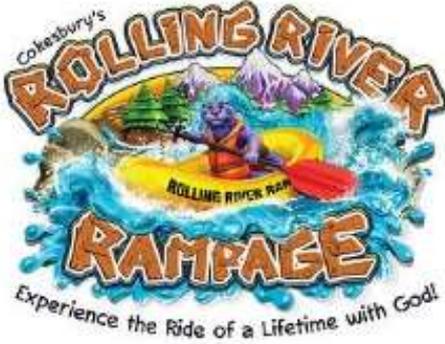
~Your Library Staff

Team Jackalope

You are invited to come and support First Bethel's own Jack Hatten at this year's Take Steps Walk for the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation, June 10th at 4:00 pm at the Northshore Riverfront Park. If you wish to join team Jackalope please contact Ellen Hatten @ 412-865-7202!



Vacation Bible School!



First Bethel's Vacation Bible School is coming and will feature the exciting, "Rolling River Rampage" Program! Children age 3 thru Grade 4 are encouraged to attend and discover their strength in God and an amazing summertime adventure!

When? Evenings from July 9-13

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 help out as a guide, teacher or helper? Contact Catherine Taylor or Melissa Smith at 412-835-0700. Thanks!**

First Bethel's Art & Music Festival

Don't miss it - Put June 2 at 6 pm on your calendar! That's when our Coffeehouse brings gifted musicians and fantastic artists together for an ***Art & Music Festival!***



Come, enjoy the music and gaze at the many forms of beautiful artwork created by our own members! Of course, there will be plenty of food and drinks available! The festivities will be held in Founder's Hall.

God has cast our confessed sins into the depths of the sea, and he's even put a "No Fishing" sign over the spot.

- D.L. Moody

Are You Interested in HEALTHY LIVING!

Tired of being tired? Would you like to lose weight and feel better? Is there anything that can be done to avoid the many artificial ingredients in food and the many infiltrates in water? There is a new group at First Bethel Church that is dedicated to living well! Our first meeting was on Tuesday May 29 where we listened to one another's ideas and shared in a brainstorming session on how we can live better and healthier. There were plenty of snacks, resources, and gifts for those who want to begin a journey that strengthens our lives and honors God. Other meetings will be held in the coming weeks so check out the July Newsletter, the bulletin, and of course, our church website.



And The Two Shall Become One!

The First Bethel family celebrates the marriage of Jeff Bradley and Laura Halsey Bradley on Saturday May 12 in Gordonsville, Virginia! Jeff and Laura have been attending First Bethel for months and live in Bethel Park. Congratulations to the happy couple!



Martha Circle News

Our annual picnic will be held Thursday, June 21, at the home of Dottie Bruckner at 6:00 p.m.



The Martha Circle takes the months of July and August off and will resume again in September.

Stay healthy and safe over the summer! See you in September!

- Donna Hennen