

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

Two of my favorite symbols for describing the Holy Spirit are included by Luke in his Pentecost story. To explain the inexplicable, to describe the indescribable, Luke portrays the presence of the Spirit as being "like a strong, driving wind" or like "tongues of fire."

Elsewhere in scripture, the presence of God's Spirit has been depicted as a dove, a burning bush, and even a still, small voice.

While these are beloved images for God's presence, William Bausch suggests that the ancient Irish were more correct when it came to Pentecost.

In the Celtic tradition, the Holy Spirit is represented not as a dove, peaceful and pure, but as a wild goose! Why? Because geese aren't controllable; they make a lot of noise with their honking and have a habit of biting those who try to contain them. They fly faster in a flock than on their own and they make excellent "guard dogs." I have been chased around by geese on more than one occasion when I tried to treat them like a domesticated animal. They, most definitely, are not.

Like the wild goose, the uncontainable Spirit of God demands a hearing. Its song is not always sweet and calming but is often strong, challenging and unnerving. The wild goose of Pentecost pulls people together and demands that they support and travel with one another. Those upon whom this wild goose rests are often compelled to become noisy, passionate and courageous guardians of the gospel. Forget the quiet cooing of the dove. Pentecost's Spirit honks, insisting that we be attentive to the needs of the world.



"Honk!" shouts the Spirit of Pentecost when justice is denied, when dignity is damaged, when rights are deprived, when sin goes unchecked, when life is not preserved and respected.

"Honk!" cries the Spirit, demanding that the Good News of Jesus' death and glorious resurrection is proclaimed to all without discrimination or skimping. It was this same Spirit that enabled all who heard them preach that day to understand, in their own language, the marvels that God has accomplished.

Pentecost is like a second creation of a world, reminding us of how “in the beginning” God breathed life into Adam and human life was created. This same unbridled life is available to us today at First Bethel Church. It offers us a passionate and purposeful presence that will give us a future that may not be calm and restrained, but powerful and creative.

Ministries are waiting to be born, meaningful suggestions are being offered, dreams and visions are being seen, and the Spirit keeps honking to keep us moving forward. These next several months are going to be invigorating. And so long as we are being led by the Spirit, God will look upon this new creation, and declare, "It is very good."

## ***Recycling Ministry at First Bethel Church!***

Did you know that you can help the church and the environment at the same time by recycling your paper and aluminum? We have received \$171 so far in 2018 because people have collected aluminum and paper for the church. Our Recycling bins are located in the upper parking lot. Thank you so much!!



## ***The Grandness of It All***

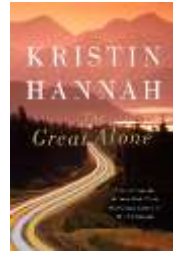
"In my twenties in San Francisco, I became a sophisticate and an acting agnostic. It wasn't that I stopped believing in God; it's just that God didn't seem to be around the neighborhoods I frequented. One day my voice teacher asked me to read a passage from a book, a section which ended with these words: 'God loves me.' He said, 'Read it again.'



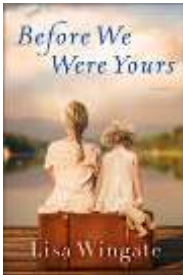
"After about the seventh repetition, I began to sense that there might be truth in the statement, that there was a possibility that God really did love me. Me. Maya Angelou. I suddenly began to cry at the grandness of it all. I knew that if God loved me, then I could do wonderful things. I could try great things, learn anything, achieve anything. For what could stand against me and God?"

## **Library News – Best-sellers**

**The Great Alone** -- It's 1974. *Ernt*, *Cora* and 13-year-old *Leni Allbright* have moved to the untamed wilderness of Alaska. Their tiny cabin has no electricity, no running water. A fierce winter arrives. Cloaked in darkness for 18 hours each day, the family fights for survival. The chickens and goats they're trying to raise are killed by a pack of wolves. *Ernt*, a troubled, sometimes volatile, ex-Vietnam POW, believed that moving to Alaska was a chance to start over, to escape the dangerous outside world. But his wife and daughter discover that the greatest danger is *inside* their snow-covered home. *Kristin Hannah* wrote this powerful family drama, published this year and already a best-seller. We also have **The Nightingale** and **Winter Garden** by this author.



**Before We Were Yours** – An “adoption” agency in Tennessee stole children and sold them to wealthy people, including movie stars.



Thousands of infants and toddlers were kidnapped or otherwise illegally taken in the 1920s, 30s and 40s. The woman in charge was *Georgia Tann*, who died in 1950 before she could be prosecuted.

Readers will find it hard to believe that so much time passed before *Tann* and corrupt judges and politicians were exposed. This heartbreaking story, based on a true-life dark chapter in American history, features two families, generations apart. The donated book by *Lisa Wingate* has had thousands of five-star reviews since it was published in 2017. *Parade* said the author reveals the “terror and heartache that is *Georgia Tann*’s legacy.” *The Huffington Post* wrote that readers would be “swept up in this near-perfect novel.”

~Your Library Staff

## ***It Really Is the Thought that Counts***

Did you happen to see an article in the Wall Street Journal about “modern” gift giving? It was about new web sites and “apps” that allow individuals to “exchange” money. It’s very useful to reimburse someone or even to split the check at a restaurant. It’s quick, easy and saves carrying a lot of cash and trying to “make change.” It can even be used to give a gift of money, and that’s where it gets interesting.

There’s an art to giving a gift, isn’t there? Because when we say “it’s the thought that counts,” we usually mean it. How much thought, time & effort the giver puts into a gift can mean more than how much the gift “cost.” We’ve probably all given (or received) gifts that “wowed” us—and maybe some that didn’t seem to involve much thought. This does NOT mean that a gift of money is not a “good” gift. It does mean that a transfer of money, done by phone, at the very last minute (say, just before you walk in the door of a birthday party) will not impress the recipient with your thoughtfulness.



So what does this have to do with Stewardship? At least a couple of things, actually, just bear with me. First, some things can be “too easy” in that they can almost be done without thinking about it. Good stewardship can NOT be done without some careful thought. God doesn’t give any of us unlimited time, talent or treasure. We’re also given the freedom to decide where to “spend” these gifts. That’s why we usually have a Stewardship “campaign” that gives each of us time to think about how and how much to give. If someone gives thoughtlessly, they may give less than they could OR more than they can afford. Either way is gonna lead to problems!

This brings us back to considering new ways to give—to each other and to the church. As we move forward with new payment options, remember that as good Stewards that how much you think about your giving is even more important than how you give.

“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,

## ***Book Club Notes!***

**FRIDAY, May 18 @ 7:30 pm**    **The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks**  
by Rebecca Skloot

"Her name was Henrietta Lacks, but scientists know her as HeLa. She was a poor black tobacco farmer whose cells—taken without her knowledge in 1951—became one of the most important tools in medicine, vital for developing the polio vaccine, cloning, gene mapping, and more. Henrietta's cells have been bought and sold by the billions, yet she remains virtually unknown, and her family can't afford health insurance. This phenomenal New York Times bestseller tells a riveting story of the collision between ethics, race, and medicine; of scientific discovery and faith healing; and of a daughter consumed with questions about the mother she never knew." (www.Amazon.com)



**THURSDAY, June 14 @ 7:30 pm**    **“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 thieve 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. In June, July and August we plan to meet on the third Thursday of the month.

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## ***Dismantling Racism***

First Bethel's Dismantling Racism group has begun to meet again! With a clear need for racial understanding in our society and an appreciation of those who are different, we invite you to enter a conversation about how we can bridge the gap and build a better, more cohesive and just community. Our next meeting is scheduled for May 27 at 6 pm at Panera Bread in South Park Shops



## ***Calling All Youth***



**Don't miss the fun and challenge of ROCK CLIMBING!** Yes, you read that right – we're going to Jumonville on May 11 for a time of excitement as we take on the rock climbing area of this beloved camp. All young people grades 6-12 are welcome! See Charlene Pauline for more information!

## ***Healthy Living!***

Plan to stop by the parsonage on Tuesday May 29 at 6:30 pm for a brainstorming session on how we can live better and healthier. There will be snacks and more as we begin a journey that strengthens our lives and honors God. Plan to be a part of the conversation at 326 Turngate Drive in Bethel Park!

## **Summer Worship Schedule**

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

**Beginning June 3 through September 2  
we will worship at 10 a.m. each week.**

**FaithLink will gather at 9:15 a.m.**

For those of you who like to get an early start on your day we will also enjoy **OUTDOOR worship at 9 a.m.** in the Hillside Worship Center



## **“Oh, the Places You’ll Go!” When You Answer the Call to Action**

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**

Our ASP teams will be heading to **Martin County, Kentucky** on June 17<sup>th</sup>. The ASP center will be at Warfield Elementary School in Warfield Kentucky. Sleeping arrangements will be in the air-conditioned gym, the school has ample space for outdoor recreation, and the showers will have hot water. Accommodations don’t get much better than that on ASP.

I always say that each ASP trip (especially someone’s first) is a giant leap of faith. Volunteers don’t usually know many details when they sign up for ASP, yet they willingly step into the unknown for a week of service not knowing quite what to expect. The destination assignments are made in the spring, and the work project is revealed just a week before the trip. Between now and June, work crews are formed, ASP staff is hired and trained, construction supplies are stocked, and the summer projects are selected. There are plenty of variables that can cause apprehension and doubt. All that got me to thinking about a verse from the wonderful work of Dr. Seuss entitled “Oh, the Places You’ll Go!”.

*“And when you're alone, there's a very good chance  
you'll meet things that scare you right out of your pants.  
There are some, down the road between hither and yon,  
that can scare you so much you won't want to go on.”*

Although we may be scared, sad, sick, worried, or weak, we go on knowing that God is with us always. We are never alone.

We closed our last meeting with the following prayer from ASP. “Our Great God, you invite us into missions and adventures of all kinds. As we begin to build our team and prepare for our trip this year, give us open hearts and minds to answer your call to do your work in the world every day. Amen.”

The ASP trip is scheduled for Sunday, June 17 – Saturday, June 23. 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). For more information on Martin County, see <https://www.facebook.com/ASPMartinWarfield>

## ***Exciting Events at First Bethel!***

There's a buzz around the church about an exciting and engaging Men's Ministry and the upcoming events that they're sponsoring!



Check out what the men have been planning!

- ◆ **GARAGE SALE** – What's more fun than rummaging around a church full of “new-to-you” treasures? The Men's group will be hosting a **SUPER GARAGE SALE** on May 5 from 7:00 a.m. thru 2:00 p.m. Discover tools, housewares, electronics, and more while supporting the Men's Ministry of our church!. We'll see you on the 5<sup>th</sup>!
  
- ◆ **CONCERT COMING IN MAY** – **The Bell'Art Ensemble**, a group of 5 professional chamber musicians will entertain you with their “The Spice of Life” variety concert. These engaging musicians will be performing in our sanctuary on May 19 at 7:00 pm **Tickets are \$15 and kids 15 and under are free!** See Ken Williams or a member of the Men's Fellowship for tickets. Don't miss their return to First Bethel! Check out their website at: [www.lrcmp.org](http://www.lrcmp.org)



The Men meets 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!

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

The Martha Circle will meet Wednesday May 9 at 7:00 pm in the Susanna Wesley Room. Bring a food item for SHIM.

Happy Mother's Day to all church mothers!

Proverbs 22:9 – “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it”





## ***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 our monthly visit as we bring songs, prayer, stories, and a healthy serving of God's love to our neighbors. **We'll gather on Friday May 4 at 3 pm. Everyone is welcome!**



## ***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! Our Scripture Study Group meets every 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.

## ***In Good Hands***

As Jesus prepared his disciples for his departure, they were full of questions — “Where are you going? How will we know the way there? Would you please just show us the Father?” — and not very satisfied with his answers. So Jesus promised to send them “another Helper” (John 14:16, ESV). And we can almost hear them protesting, like kids bemoaning a favorite coach's retirement or church members grieving a beloved pastor's call to serve elsewhere: “Oh, great. Someone new for us to get to know. It won't be the same. It won't be you.”



Except ... the word another has two forms in Greek: “another just like this one” and “another, different version.” And when the author of John translated Jesus' Aramaic into Greek, the first definition was the accurate one. Jesus was assuring his disciples they'd be in good hands, at peace and secure because the new Helper — the Holy Spirit — would be another just like him.

- based on Fearless, by Max Lucado

# **PENTECOST IS COMING!**

Plan to be here **on Sunday May 20** as we celebrate the gift of God's Holy Spirit to the first disciples and the continued presence of the Spirit today! Wear red, enjoy the invigorating Spirit, and dream of how the mighty presence of God can re-form the church for today!



## ***Choir Appreciation!***

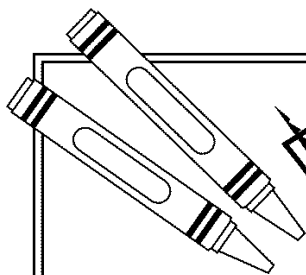
Join us at the **9 a.m. worship service on May 20** as we take time to recognize the women and men of our choirs. They give many hours of their time each week to prepare anthems which enhance the worship experience of the entire congregation. Be here to say, “thank you” for a ministry that is consistently bringing the love of God, through music, to us all.

## ***Taize Prayer Service***



Don't forget to join us on **Wed. May 16 at 7:30 p.m.** for our next Prayer Service. Make a Lenten pilgrimage to a deeper place in your heart as we remember our need for God's active presence in our lives. Scripture, songs, silence, and holy communion – vital disciplines to Christians across the ages will be available for you.

*There's always room in the musical ensemble for singers and instrumentalists. Please see Pastor Tom for more information. Rehearsal is May 16 at 6:30 pm*



# PUZZLE

## WORTHY OF RESPECT

On Mother's Day, we celebrate our moms and everything they do for us. How does God tell us to treat our moms?



Directions: Using the key below, fill in the blanks to complete Deuteronomy 5:16, NIV.

A	C	D	M*	N*	O*
E	F	G	P*	R*	S*
H	I	L	T*	U*	Y*

" \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_

and your \_\_\_\_\_,

the \_\_\_\_\_ your \_\_\_\_\_ has

\_\_\_\_\_."

\_\_\_\_\_ 5:16, NIV

Answer: "Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you." Deuteronomy 5:16, NIV



***Let's Go to the Ball Park  
On July 8<sup>th</sup>!***

**The Washington Wild**



**Things**

**Are Having A**

**Faith and Family Night.**

***Adult tickets are \$8,  
children under 12 are free.***

**Festivities begin at 3:30 with a pregame  
concert by the**



***“Red Letter Hymnal”***



**and first pitch is at 5:35 p.m.**

**Reserve your spot today by signing up in  
the Narthex or calling**

**Lynda at 412-835-6141 .**

**Reservations and payment must be made  
by May 14th**

***WILD THINGS***

# ***Beginning ... and Beginning Again***

It's the season of graduations, and during the coming weeks, as you or someone you love celebrates graduation, remember it isn't a closed door, an end or a farewell. Instead, it's an entryway threshold, a beginning, a hello — and one of many such opportunities that mark life.

“God wants us to know that life is a series of beginnings, not endings, just as graduations are not terminations but commencements,” writes author and MD Bernie Siegel. “Creation is an ongoing process, and when we create a perfect world where love and compassion are shared by all, suffering will cease.”



Of course, we can “create a perfect world” only by letting God guide our actions. So, dear graduates, may you partner with God to meet suffering with love, kindness and compassion through all the new beginnings of your life!

## ***Who's Your Authority?***

A Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agent arrived at a ranch in Texas telling the old rancher that he needed to search his property for illegal drugs. The rancher cheerfully assented, but said, "Just don't go into that field over there."

This made the DEA agent suspicious. "Look, mister," he said, pulling a badge out of his pocket. "I have the full authority of the federal government behind me. I'll go anywhere on your ranch that I want!"

The rancher silently nodded and went off to resume his chores. Moments later he heard loud screams. Looking up, he saw the DEA agent running for his life, being chased by the rancher's bull.

The bull was gaining on him. The agent frantically gestured to the rancher for help.

The rancher cupped his hands around his mouth and called out in a loud voice: "YOUR BADGE! SHOW HIM YOUR BADGE!"

There are limits to human authority.

## ***Youth Group Schedule!***

- ◆ **Church Clean-Up Day**... Keep our church home looking beautiful! Saturday April 28 9 am
  
- ◆ **Car Wash Youth Fundraiser** (in conjunction with Men's garage sale) Lots of help needed! Saturday May 5 9am-12pm
  
- ◆ **Jumonville Rock Climbing Wall** (\$10) Please let me know if you plan on attending. Bring a friend! Friday May 11 4:45pm-10pm
  
- ◆ **Cystic Fibrosis walk** ....Let's get a team together to support Ms. Phil's grandson, Clayton. It will be fun and a good way for us to show Ms. Phil what she means to us! Saturday May 19
  
- ◆ **Confirmation**... Congratulations to our 2018 Confirmands! Sunday June 3 10 am
  
- ◆ **Crohn's and Colitis Walk** in honor of Jack Hatten. Come support our friend as he serves as this year's Pediatric Honored Hero! Sunday June 10th 4pm-7pm
  
- ◆ **ASP Mission Trip** Dare to care for our neighbors in Kentucky! June 17-23



**That's all for now! No matter what we do, we always seem to have a fun time and get a little closer to God! All young people grades 6-12 are welcome! Join us! See Charlene Pauline for more information!**

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