



First Bethel Church  
King's Light newsletter



2024

# FROM THE HEART

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
THOUGHTS FROM PASTOR DAVID



This past year (2023) brought about exciting growth and ministry accomplishments for First Bethel! We have much in which to be thankful! This next year will hold a particular challenge for First Bethel that I need to share with you. This is 2024's forecasted budget shortfall.

Budget shortfalls have been typical for First Bethel for many years now. Profits from King School Kids (KSK) tuition have met those shortfalls... until the COVID-19 pandemic. The wake of the pandemic left KSK with a very significant enrollment reduction and a challenge maintaining the staffing necessary to recover child enrollment. Those KSK profits that once were used to balance the church operational side have not resumed. Additionally, many of those who provided offerings for the church budget never returned to active membership after the pandemic, matching a trend found at most churches.

Long-story-short, the church's Finance Committee is forecasting a very large financial shortfall, meaning church costs are projected to exceed church income significantly in 2024. The result is a projected cash shortfall by/during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the year, challenging the church's ability to pay bills and meet payroll. The church needs your help and partnering to keep this from happening, in order that First Bethel's life-changing ministries are not interrupted.

The church's Finance Committee is the group charged with the responsibility of developing a plan to meet this challenge. The Finance Committee has discussed possibilities and would like to share them with the church membership. The date/time is Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, immediately following the 9:30 AM worship service. Please plan to attend.

In the meantime, know that God isn't done with First Bethel. This past year proves that. We had an increase in worship attendance, baptisms, new members, and new ministries. We maintained and grew existing ministries. But ministry does have a price connected to it. Therefore, please consider how you may increase your financial partnership with First Bethel.

Please contact me if you have any questions or thoughts. My personal phone is 412-818-0889 and my office at the church is 412-835-0700. My email is: [pastordavid@firstbethelumc.org](mailto:pastordavid@firstbethelumc.org). I look forward to seeing you soon!

That's from the Heart,

*Pastor David*



**Church**  
FINANCES

**Please plan to stay for a Congregational Meeting immediately after 9:30AM worship on January 7<sup>th</sup>. The Finance Committee would like to share the Church's financial position for 2024.**



Church Council has decided to move forward with the “**Good Futures Accelerator Program**” designed by **Ministry Incubators** to assist local churches with discerning the future use of church assets for ministry and revenue.

The program is designed so that **we** (First Bethel - not consultants) will envision & discern our own resources and opportunities for growth. The \$1000 cost of the program has been donated by a church member.

# ***Sunday Worship Schedule***



**9:30AM**

**Worship in the Sanctuary**

**10:30AM**

**Coffee Hour and Fellowship Time**

**10:30AM**

**Sunday School for all ages  
Wired Word – Adults**





## January

Jan 1 Nathan Mellott	Jan 19 Andy Jack
Jan 1 Alex Zahniser	Jan 22 Erin Martin
Jan 9 Taryn Powell	Jan 22 Don Ruffing
Jan 10 Mindy Jack	Jan 25 Barb Dillon
Jan 10 Ian McDonald	Jan 25 Keith Dutcher
Jan 14 Kristy Fink	Jan 25 Ricky Mellott
Jan 14 Melissa Smith	Jan 25 Kitty Orr
Jan 15 Carolyn Taylor	Jan 28 Andrea Swift
Jan 17 Zofia Smith	Jan 30 Patty Laing
Jan 18 Miles Fawcett	

## February

Feb 1 Jim Howells	Feb 22 Kayla Zakrzewski
Feb 1 Charlene Phillips	Feb 25 Bruce Cook
Feb 3 Marc Fawcett	Feb 25 Jane Cooper
Feb 6 William McDonald	Feb 25 Donna Leonhardt
Feb 9 Pam Bright	Feb 26 Jordan Cummings
Feb 12 Charlene Pauline	Feb 26 Kadin Gray
Feb 17 Patty Vitale	Feb 28 Sandy Mason
Feb 20 Sherry Kendall	

# BEYOND THE PLATE

## 2023 HIGHLIGHTS



First Bethel has been a vibrant, active church for over 75 years, and 2023 was no exception. Despite the many negative impacts of COVID, it's appropriate to celebrate all of the faithful ways we continue to move with a generous spirit **beyond the plate** with ministries and outreach programs

that touch our congregation as well as our local, regional and global neighbors. First Bethel's Mission Statement is:

***“Nourish Every Body, Stimulate Every Spirit,  
Satisfy Every Soul for the Glory of God!”***

What follows is a condensed recap of just a few of the many ways your gifts went **beyond the plate**. Consider how many of these ministries couldn't happen without the funds to support the facilities and people that make these efforts so successful.

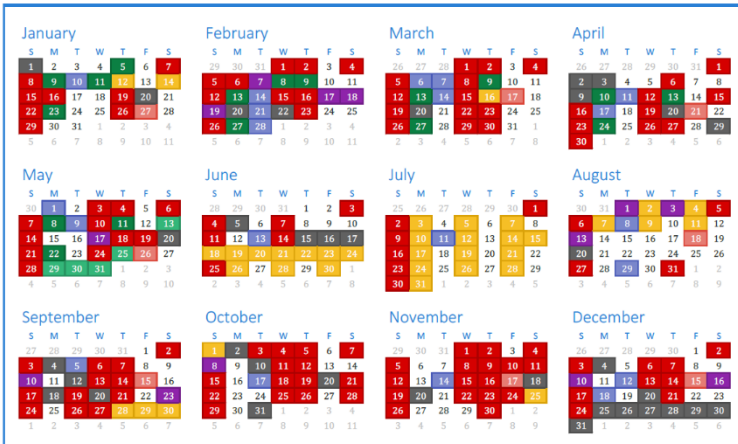
- ◆ Our community may know us best for our Kings School Kids Childcare center which provides safe, loving, Christian based care to many children and their families.
- ◆ Prepared, delivered and served full ham dinner meals to Pittsburgh's North Side six times as a part of our Daily Bread ministry. Nothing says we care like a meal and a smile.
- ◆ Purchased and/or collected eyeglasses, blankets, shoes, children's diapers & wipes, non-perishable food, toiletries, and personal care items which were then distributed through Melting Pot, Church World Service, SHIM, The Nyadire Connection and other organizations
- ◆ Started a new “Upside” adult discipleship program on Wednesday evenings based on “The Covenant” and “The Chosen Series”
- ◆ Received five new adult members and baptized babies into our fold.

- ◆ Sent ten volunteers to Logan County WV on our annual Appalachia Service Project summer mission trip. Volunteers began work to add insulation and new vinyl siding to Thomas' home. Seven adults traveled to Jonesville, VA on an ASP adult trip in the fall where we worked on a porch, steps and railings for Nina and her family.
- ◆ The Kids Meal Network was a new community outreach ministry activated for the summer months, providing hot lunches (provided by a government grant) three days a week for children living in the Parkford Apartments in South Park.
- ◆ Our own Phil Himmler again led the charge to have First Bethel purchase the most tickets for the Rotary Chicken BBQ, hoping to receive the \$5,000 grant which goes towards education of teens in Zimbabwe through The Nyadire Connection (TNC).
- ◆ First Bethel folks provided 14 scholarships at \$1,400 each to provide basic school supplies and cover school fees for TNC students in Zimbabwe.
- ◆ The Trustees were able to have a new front entry completed on the church building which provides protection from the elements and gives our entrance a welcoming appearance. They also made major repairs to our boilers and are responsible for the installation of a new door security system.
- ◆ Eight adults and youth traveled to the UMCOR Mission Barn in New Castle to assist in assembling cleaning kits and building a section of a handicap ramp.
- ◆ Our Youth Group has been revitalized and activities included a car wash, a trip to a trampoline park, an escape room, a winter retreat weekend at Jumonville, and a monthly breakfast event called "Pancakes with the Pastor".
- ◆ The Prayer Quilt ministry made several quilts which were given to people with health or home-bound struggles, and quilts were also given to the families we served on ASP. Each quilt carried knots tied by the congregation to represent our prayers.

- ◆ Our “Hero Hotline” Vacation Bible School was small but mighty in the great lessons about how we are “Called Together to Serve God”
- ◆ We host several Girl Scout groups during weekday evenings, providing a safe, secure and welcoming environment for their activities.
- ◆ Every Sunday, we offer a stimulating worship experience consisting of word, music, and fellowship. Special season worship services are held on Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday and Advent where we welcome regulars and visitors alike.

We are a happening church. Check out the 2023 “year at a glance” calendar below. Each color represents SOMETHING that was happening within or beyond our church walls last year.

# 2023



Be aware of the folks around you, acknowledge needs (even your own); hear the good stories, love your neighbor, and pray without ceasing. We are indeed a church filled with heart, determination, a strong work ethic, warm community, and great faith. We hope you’ll continue to support First Bethel with your prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness in 2024 and beyond.

*by Lorna Schlutz and Gloria Stephan*



# Outreach

by Lorna Schlutz

As always, our First Bethel family supported the Outreach mission with heart and generosity.



Of the special requests presented on the Angel Trees, twenty-five were specified and dedicated for Familylinks, five angel requests were fulfilled for Kings School Kids, and in response to six angel requests, six envelopes totaling \$325 were allocated for the The Nyadire Connection, Home of Hope Orphanage in Africa.

Because of generous and ongoing congregational support for Daily Bread, we were able to serve 141 plates of food to hungry people on December 10. As a bonus, we welcomed two new First Bethel volunteers with interest in continuing to serve our Daily Bread effort. Daily Bread meal service generates so much energy (and good humor) both in the kitchen and in the dining room.

All of the above-mentioned requests are fulfilled by the giving hearts of First Bethel's congregation, and each and every opportunity presented this Advent/Christmas Season was met. We remain grateful to be able to witness the incredible generosity of the fellowship that is First Bethel.

Our next Daily Bread trip to the North Side is scheduled for Sunday, January 14.

For our January project, we will be collecting clean, slightly used coats as well as clothing and household items like sheets and blankets for people in need.

Contact Sally Irick or anyone else on the Outreach team if you'd like to get involved with one or more of the many available opportunities.

# LIBRARY NEWS

## Pittsburgh's Life-saving Heroes

### AMERICAN SIRENS: The Incredible Story of the Black Men Who Became America's First Paramedics



They came from Pittsburgh's Hill District. Fifty-six years ago they formed *Freedom House Ambulance*, overcoming racism and other obstacles to save lives. This was the first of what became the EMT services Americans rely on -- in one emergency after another. A publisher's note says this book, recently donated to our Library, is "a rich, troubled but ultimately inspiring history of a group who answered America's call for help ..."

**MEL FELL** – A cute picture book about a little bird flying for the first time. Turn it from side to side to follow Mel's flight, and make sure you read the author's note at the end. Ages 4-8. Story and drawings by *Corey R. Tabor*, creator of several award-winning books for children. Also donated.

### **A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE – The Untold Story of the Woman Who Helped Win World War II**

Her name was *Virginia Hall*. She was a Baltimore socialite, disabled but determined to do her part in the war. Virginia worked behind enemy lines in Nazi-occupied France. She spoke French and German, often changed her name and her appearance -- even drew wrinkles on her face. She organized spy networks, helped escaped prisoners, coordinated parachute drops of supplies and set up attacks on German convoys. Virginia dealt with the usual prejudice a woman faced in the military but, eventually, she received the *Distinguished Service Cross* -- and the *CIA* named one of its buildings after her.

**These books are among the 40 added to our Church Library in 2023.**

**Your Library Staff**

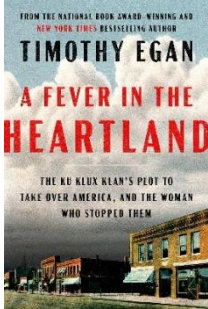
# BOOK CLUB

Book Club will NOT meet in January. The next meeting will be on Friday, February 16<sup>th</sup> at 7PM at Panera Bread in South Park Shops.



Book Club Selections

## January - No meeting



### Friday, February 16 – A Fever in the Heartland by Timothy Egan

A Fever in the Heartland: The Ku Klux Klan's Plot to Take Over America, and the Woman Who Stopped Them

"With narrative elan, Egan gives us a riveting saga of how a predatory con man became one of the most powerful people in 1920s America, Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan, with a plan to rule the country—and how a grisly murder of a woman brought him down. Compelling and chillingly resonant with our own time." —Erik Larson



## OFFERING ENVELOPES

2024 Offering Envelopes are in the Narthex, please get yours today! Refer to the alphabetic listing if you've forgotten your envelope number.

Contact the Church Office if you'd like to learn more about online giving instead of, or in addition to your envelope giving. There are many options available on the "Ways to Give" page at the end of this newsletter.

## The new system is in!



The new VizPin system has been installed for church building access and the old system will be decommissioned in the spring.

## Building Access

The new system uses your smartphone for access. If you currently have a key fob, please contact the Church Office, or see Gloria Stephan for instructions on setting up the new system and returning your fob.



# "THANKS!"

Dear First Bethel,

Kings School Kids would like to say THANK YOU to those who provided gifts from the Angel Tree. Your generosity is greatly appreciated, and each gift will be enjoyed by many children in our care.

Thanks,

*Mary Beth Deckard (KSK Director)*

## FROM THE FBUMC MEN'S GROUP



The next meetings for the Men's Group will be Saturday, January 6 and Saturday, February 3 at 8:30AM in Founders Hall at the church.

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### MARTHA CIRCLE

Martha Circle will meet on Wednesday, January 10 and Wednesday, February 14 at 1PM in the Susanna Wesley room of the church. All ladies are welcome.

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## SPECIAL OFFERINGS FOR MINISTRIES



### JANUARY FOCUS MINISTRY

SHIM (SOUTH HILLS INTERFAITH MOVEMENT)

### FEBRUARY FOCUS MINISTRY

OUR TRUSTEES

***ALTHOUGH WE FOCUS ON A SPECIFIC MINISTRY EACH MONTH FOR EXTRA MILE OFFERINGS, THE BEST WAY TO SUPPORT ALL THE MINISTRIES OF FIRST BETHEL IS DIRECTING YOUR DONATIONS TO THE GENERAL MINISTRIES FUND.***



## BUILDING KINDNESS

by Gloria Stephan



Building Kindness will be ASP's 2024 theme.

Now that's an idea I can get behind!

It is based on Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you."

Our trip is scheduled for:

**SUNDAY, JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup> THROUGH SATURDAY, JUNE 22**

ASP is open to high-school age students and adult group leaders. The cost of the trip is \$375/volunteer plus the cost of transportation and supplies like safety gear and first aid items. All meals, lodging and construction materials are provided by ASP. **Volunteers should submit a non-refundable deposit of \$50/youth or \$100/adult to First Bethel by February 4.** You may submit part or all of the \$375 volunteer fee, but this is not a requirement. Construction skills are welcome but not required.

Contact me at [gstephan57@gmail.com](mailto:gstephan57@gmail.com) if you have questions, need more information, or if you're interested in joining us! See [www.ASPHome.org](http://www.ASPHome.org) Summer Trips for more details.

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### Save the Date!



We're planning another ASP Trivia Night fundraiser for **Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup> 2024** at 5PM with a Leap Year Theme. Stay tuned for more information on how to join a team and help us raise funds for our next ASP trip!



The Youth Group's Progressive Dinner was Saturday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> and our hosts were Jaime & Robin Gray for appetizers, Pastor David & Christina Ewing for dinner, and Mike & Gloria Stephan for dessert.

Thanks to Meredith Steinhagen for organizing the event and activities, and thanks to our adult drivers too!



*Our Youth Group has been "tied up"!*

- ◆ The youth kicked off the season by attending our Avent Celebration, where they made emoji calendars filled with treats and some very unique gingerbread houses.
- ◆ Several fun "care packages" were assembled and sent to our youth group alumni who are now away at college.
- ◆ Our youth continue to meet at the church for "Pancakes With the Pastor" at 8:30AM on the second Sunday of each month. Good food and lively conversations are always on the menu.
- ◆ The Youth Retreat to Jumonville will be **February 16-18, 2024**. Contact Meredith Steinhagen, Youth Coordinator, for more details. All junior and senior high school aged students are welcome to join us for this fun weekend event. We're hoping for snow :^)





## TIME AND TALENTS TO SHARE?

Are you interested in volunteering but don't know who to ask?

Here are some areas for you to consider:

On Sunday mornings: We need Greeters, Liturgists, Acolytes (elementary school age and youth) and Coffee Hosts – we REALLY need more Coffee Hosts.

During the week: We need Sanctuary Cleaning Teams, an Altar Guild person, and we also need more trained Counters to verify the weekly collection and make the bank deposit.

Can you give an hour of your time every month or so? Please contact Gloria Stephan or the Church Office if you can serve.

We use an online scheduling system called Ministry Scheduler Pro that makes it easy to indicate when you're not available to serve, and it's super easy to request a substitute when needed. Please consider it!

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## Do you shop online? Keep reading!



Please take a moment to install the **iGive** add-in to your browser so First Bethel can benefit from your shopping at almost 2,000 sites.

We'll get a percentage of your purchases at no cost to you. See the next page or contact us – thanks!



**You Shop. Your Charity Gets Money. For Free.™**





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**You Shop. Your Charity Gets Money. For Free.™**

iGive is a free service where online shopping at over 1,800 stores like Walmart, Travelocity, CVS, Overstock, and many more, means a donation to your favorite cause.



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**Help First Bethel United Methodist Church  
with free donations  
whenever you shop online with [iGive.com](https://www.iGive.com)**

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The stores make this possible because they want you to like them and shop at them over and over again. You'll find socially responsible stores helping to make donations happen.

It works very much like the discontinued AmazonSmile.

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We hope you'll give it a try.

To learn more or sign up now, use this link:

<https://www.iGive.com/Pb1rX>

or our custom QR Code



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Thank You for supporting  
First Bethel UMC  
5901 Library Road Bethel Park, PA



**First Bethel**

Bethel Park, Pennsylvania

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## Ways to Give

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### IN PERSON



Whether it's cash or check, we appreciate your gifts. Place your donation in an offering envelope and drop it in the offering plate or mail it to the church.

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### ONLINE VIA CHURCH WEBSITE



Visit our website at <https://www.firstbethelumc.org> and click **DONATE** to set up a one-time or recurring donation/payment.

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### ONLINE GIVING PAGE

Scan the QR code to visit our secure Vanco online giving page.

<https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z375/home>



### MOBILE APP

Scan the QR code to use the **VANCO MOBILE APP**



If you wish to give to a designated ministry area that's not visible online or on your offering envelope, select "Designated Other" and indicate the fund in the Notes.

Call the church office at 412-835-0700  
with any questions!



# First Bethel United Methodist Church

Bethel Park, Pennsylvania

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

5901 Library Road

Bethel Park, PA 15102

<http://www.firstbethelumc.org>

**Church Office**

**412-835-0700**

[FBUMC@Verizon.net](mailto:FBUMC@Verizon.net)



**Kings School Kids**

**412-835-6141**

[KSK10@Verizon.net](mailto:KSK10@Verizon.net)

**Pastor:** Rev. David Ewing

Mobile: 412-818-0889

[PastorDavid@FirstBethelumc.org](mailto:PastorDavid@FirstBethelumc.org)

**Office Manager:** Lisa Stefanowicz

[OfficeManager@FirstBethelumc.org](mailto:OfficeManager@FirstBethelumc.org)

**Choir Director and Organist:** Phil Himmler

**Director of Maintenance:** Jim Howells

## **KINGS SCHOOL KIDS**

**Director of KSK:** Mary Beth Deckard

**Assistant Director of KSK:** Nicole Crisson

**KSK Office Administrator:** Charlene Phillips



<https://www.facebook.com/FirstBethelUMC/>

**KINGS LIGHT DEADLINE:** The 20<sup>th</sup> of each month is the deadline for submissions for the next issue of the King's Light. Please have your information in on time to avoid the disappointment of not having it appear in the next edition. Mail it to us, drop it off, or send via email to [FBUMC@Verizon.net](mailto:FBUMC@Verizon.net)

**FIRST BETHEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**5901 LIBRARY ROAD**

**BETHEL PARK, PA 15102-3398**

**[www.firstbethelumc.org](http://www.firstbethelumc.org)**

***January/February 2023***

***King's Light Newsletter***