



First Bethel Church  
King's Light newsletter



2024

# FROM THE HEART

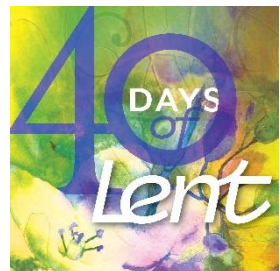
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
THOUGHTS FROM PASTOR DAVID



Amongst the many stories of personal transformation in the Bible, if one needs to guess, or go to a 'default' time, there is a common number. Forty. Forty seems to be the 'default' time God uses to transform those God has allowed to endure trial.

In the opening stories of the Bible, we read of Noah's family and the gathered animals in the ark for forty days. This period provided a time for Noah & family to experience God's judgement, grace, and restoration. After Moses killed the Egyptian abusing his fellow Israelite, Moses fled to the desert for forty days to escape certain death. Later in his life, Moses retreated on Mount Sinai for forty days, interceding for Israel's survival before God. The Israelites wandered the desert for forty years. Goliath taunted Israel's army forty days before David killed him. In the New Testament, we see Jesus tempted forty days in the desert before beginning his public ministry. And there were forty days after Jesus' resurrection and his ascension.

We are in the midst of the period of Lent...a period of forty days between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday. We look to be transformed during this period of time...in all the ways those mentioned above would have been transformed. Perhaps these words from our United Methodist Book of Worship can assist us in positioning ourselves for transformation.



This is the *Invitation to the Observation of Lenten Discipline*:

*Dear brothers and sisters in Christ: the early Christians observed with great devotion the days of our Lord's passion and resurrection, and it became the custom of the Church that before the Easter celebration there should be a forty-day season of spiritual preparation.*

*During this season converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when persons who had committed serious sins and had separated themselves from the community of faith were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to participation in the life of the Church.*

*In this way the whole congregation was reminded of the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ and the need we all have to renew our faith. I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to observe a holy Lent: by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's Holy Word.*

*To make a right beginning of repentance, and as a mark of our mortal nature, let us now kneel (bow) before our Creator and Redeemer.*

May our hearts be transformed, that our readiness for the celebration of Easter may be primed and ready to overflow with gladness and joy! That's what coming "From the Heart" this month friends! May God be with us as we continue journeying together!

From the Heart,  
Pastor David



Dear First Bethel,

On Monday, February 19, we held our first council meeting since we informed you of the near-term financial shortfall our church is facing. We know you are eager for an update.

At the January congregational meeting, you learned that the council is working to cut costs and develop new, sustainable revenue sources. We asked you to direct your offerings to the General Fund, and to prayerfully ask God what you, as a member of His Church, could do. We are happy to report that we have made some progress.

- **On cost-cutting measures:** Our efforts to reduce expenses appear to be working to decrease a small part of the expected shortfall. We've also shifted money from a few small inactive funds to the General Fund and note that a number of you have redirected your offerings there too. Thank you. If you haven't yet taken this step, please consider doing so.
- **On the revenue side:** Our Kings School Kids team is working diligently to iron out staffing issues so they can expand enrollment and improve revenues. They've made some progress over the last month, but it's too soon to put numbers to it. We hope to be able to do so after the first quarter. We are happy to report that the pledges for giving are higher this year and could possibly shave another 5% or so from the shortfall when they are honored. Thank you.
- **On new work and ministries:** Members of the church and your elected leadership met in January to establish *initial goals for 2024* that are fitting and appropriate for First Bethel and to align them with both existing and new church work. A tool has been purchased to help our leadership imagine and design new ways to use our property and buildings for God's ministry and to help make up the rest of the shortfall. This effort is starting in March

**What can you do now?** To help connect you with this work, and make it yours, we are holding a **Spiritual Gifts Fair on Sunday, March 10, at 10:30AM after church in the narthex.** We urge you to come to this fair with an open heart. Please, come pray with us and find the area where God wants you to serve, so we can work together to shape First Bethel's future. We can't do this without you.

First Bethel UMC Council

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## ***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**

# WHAT ARE YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

by Catherine Taylor



Everyone is a gift and a blessing, and we all have talents and ways to serve. In Pastor David's recent sermon series he preached on Spiritual Gifts and encouraged everyone to take an inventory through the United Methodist Church Spiritual Gifts Inventory.

You can complete yours here:

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/spiritual-gifts-inventory/en>

I'll share my results below:

- Teaching - the gift of bringing scriptural and spiritual truths to others. More than just teaching Christian education classes, teachers witness to the truth of Jesus Christ in a variety of ways, and they help others to understand the complex realities of the Christian faith. Teachers are revealers. They shine the light of understanding into the darkness of doubt and ignorance. They open people to new truths, and they challenge people to be more in the future than they have been in the past.
- Compassion - the gift of exceptional empathy with those in need that moves us to action. More than just concern, compassion demands that we share the suffering of others in order to connect the gospel truth with other realities of life. Compassion moves us beyond our comfort zones to offer practical, tangible aid to all God's children, regardless of the worthiness of the recipients or the response we receive for our service.
- Knowledge - the gift of knowing the truth through faithful study of Scripture and the human situation. Knowledge provides the information necessary for the transformation of the world and the formation of the body of Christ. Those possessing the gift of knowledge challenge the fellowship to improve itself through study, reading of Scripture, discussion, and prayer.

Now I am asking you to look at yourselves. What are your Spiritual Gifts? How can you apply them here inside and outside the walls of First Bethel? I'll tell you how! We're having a Spiritual Gifts Fair in the Narthex on Sunday, March 10 after church. There will be representatives from every leadership committee, supportive committee and social group that operates within First Bethel. It is my hope that you will stop by and see what is offered, put your name down, and continue to become plugged in to life at First Bethel by sharing YOUR spiritual gifts with all of us.

## Spiritual Gifts Fair



**Sunday, March 10 2024**

**In the Narthex after church**

# FIRST BETHEL UMC MINISTRY GOALS FOR 2024

Time has moved quickly since the first meeting in December to discuss and prayerfully consider what First Bethel's goals and objectives might be. The goals have since been refined, approved by Council, and sent to our District Superintendent.

Our church's organizational structure is divided into two main elements - Administrative and Ministry. The Ministry element is outlined by Nurture, Outreach and Witness (NOW).

Each goal has metrics and measurements, which will help us to see how we're doing. Call the Church Office if you want a copy of the details. Below is a *condensed* summary of those goals

**NURTURE GOALS** (includes education, worship, Christian formation, membership care, small groups, stewardship, and more)

1. Increase congregational involvement in administrative and program ministries.
2. Grow Youth Ministry
3. Improve Intra (inside) Church Communications

**OUTREACH GOALS** (attention to local, regional and global ministries of compassion, justice and advocacy)

1. Grow Parkford Apartment Outreach
2. Maintain Current Outreach: ASP, Daily Bread, Angel Tree, Prayer Quilts, The Nyadire Connection, etc.

**WITNESS GOALS** (developing and strengthening evangelistic efforts of Christian experience, faith and service)

1. Increase extra-church (outside) communication
2. Increase engagement with neighboring businesses and our community
3. Renew the ministry of First Bethel Ambassadors who are scheduled and available on Sunday mornings
4. Discern & develop new revenue-bearing ministry



## DO YOU HAVE A KEY FOB?



### Building Access

The new VizPin system has been installed. The new system uses a smart phone app to allow access to authorized users. If you are currently authorized to have a key fob for entering the church building during off hours, you **MUST** convert to the new system now. **The old system will be uninstalled by March 17<sup>th</sup>, after which the old key fobs will no longer work!**

Full Instructions are available in the Narthex, or by contacting the Church Office.

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## EASTER FLOWERS



Beautify the Sanctuary on Easter Sunday morning by ordering flowers in memory or honor of loved ones.

Choices include Lillies, Hyacinths, Tulips and Daffodils. Cost is \$11 per six inch pot.

Return your order form and payment with your offering envelope **by March 10<sup>th</sup>** (marked “Easter Flowers”).

You can also order online using this link:

[Order Easter Flowers](#)

You can also make payments online via Vanco, select “Other Designated” and put “Easter Flowers” in the text field.

The flowers are yours to take after the Easter Sunday worship service.

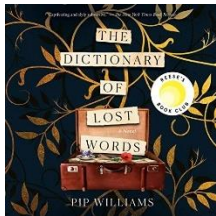
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# CHURCH LIBRARY NEWS

A "love-letter to words"



## THE DICTIONARY OF LOST WORDS



In this work of historical fiction, male editors discarded "female-oriented" words while creating the *Oxford English Dictionary*. A girl named *Esme*, whose father worked on the dictionary, saved the "lost words," with help from her friend *Lizzie*, a family servant. The story, set during the height of the women's suffrage movement, has been described as a "love-letter to words." The author is *Pip Williams*.

## FLASH: The Homeless Donkey Who Taught Me About Life, Faith and Second Chances.

This memoir by Texas author/artist *Rachel Anne Ridge* tells us how she learned from *Flash* after giving him a home. The *Chicago Tribune* said their story "may make you adopt a donkey of your own."

## TOM LAKE

*Lara's* three adult daughters are intrigued about her life before they were born, including her connection to a famous actor. As she tells them about it while they pick cherries in the family orchard during the pandemic, they are compelled to re-examine their own lives – and dreams. One review says this 2023 novel by noted author *Ann Patchett* is a meditation of love "with piercing insights into family dynamics."

**YOUR LIBRARY STAFF**

# BOOK CLUB

**Book Club meets on the third Friday of the month at 7PM at Panera Bread in South Park Shops.**

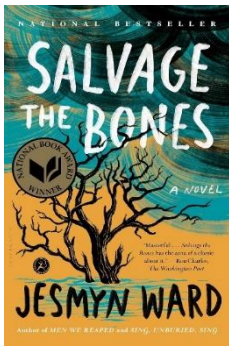


**Book Club Selections**

New folks are always welcome, even if you haven't read our monthly suggestions.

We're always looking for recommendations and we'd love to chat about what you've been reading!

## **March 15 *Salvage the Bones* by Jesmyn Ward**



A hurricane is building over the Gulf of Mexico, threatening the coastal town of Bois Sauvage, Mississippi, and Esch's father is growing concerned. A hard drinker, largely absent, he doesn't show concern for much else. Esch and her three brothers are stocking food, but there isn't much to save. Lately, Esch can't keep down what food she gets; she's fourteen and pregnant. Her brother Skeetah is sneaking scraps for his prized pit bull's new litter, dying one by one in the dirt. Meanwhile, brothers Randall and Junior try to stake their claim in a family long on child's play and short on parenting.

As the twelve days that make up the novel's framework yield to their dramatic conclusion, this unforgettable family--motherless children sacrificing for one another as they can, protecting and nurturing where love is scarce--pulls itself up to face another day. A big-hearted novel about familial love and community against all odds, and a wrenching look at the lonesome, brutal, and restrictive realities of rural poverty, *Salvage the Bones* is muscled with poetry, revelatory, and real.



Mar 2 Bernie Avon

Mar 3 John Brevard

Mar 8 Richard Dickey

Mar 8 Darrell Ulbrich

Mar 9 John Dunbar

Mar 11 David Martin

Mar 11 Patrick Martin

Mar 11 Beth Mellott

Mar 11 Lisa Newman

Mar 11 Mike Stephan

Mar 11 Terry Taylor

Mar 12 Conrad Dutcher

Mar 13 Jay Zeminski

Mar 14 Ryan Martin

Mar 15 Michael Taylor

Mar 16 Diana Reed

Mar 24 Nathan Armstrong

Mar 24 John Harmon

Mar 27 Terry Snead

Mar 31 Tom Cingel

Mar 31 David Swift



To my friends at First Bethel United Methodist Church,  
I can't begin to tell you how much comfort your prayer  
quilt has brought and how much it has meant to me.

If I'm having a bad day, I just wrap myself up in my quilt.

I really do appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Sincerely,

*Marilyn Kebe*



The Youth Retreat to Jumonville was **February 16-18, 2024** and they had SNOW!!



Thanks to our chaperones, Janice, Melissa, Dave M and Phil! They also had a visit from Pastor David, Christina and Amy S.

In January, eight excited youth, one excited chaperone, and one apprehensive chaperone ventured out to climb high into the church rafters at Dragons Den. Our minds and bodies were tested, but we put our faith into God and the skills He gave us which enabled all to traverse the zip line to the end. Our reward: knowing when faced with challenges God and friends are there to give encouragement.



The next Youth event is a trip to Splat: A Make & Take Art Studio on Sunday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at 1PM. Contact Meredith Steinhagen for more details.



**BUILDING  
KINDNESS**  
by Gloria Stephan



**Ephesians 4:32, “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you.”**

As the current trip coordinator for First Bethel’s ASP trips, I’m responsible for overseeing the tasks that are required to get a group of volunteers to Appalachia for a week of service. There are forms to fill out, meetings to schedule, supplies to gather, emails to send, files to maintain, vans to rent, first aid kits to restock, and the list goes on and on.....like this sentence.

Luckily, I discovered that Administration is one of my spiritual gifts and I love doing this work! Plus, I have a great team of folks working with me, and I absolutely could not do this without them.

However, at the last Council meeting, I expressed my concern about asking the congregation to support our ASP ministry because we are laser focused on the critical and primary need to fund the General Ministries of First Bethel. ASP is funded by designated contributions only. I do recognize that the church is the foundation which allows the ASP ministry (and all the others) to happen. Without a church building, staff, and congregation, there wouldn’t be an ASP group to coordinate.

The response at Council was clear to me. We should first support the General Ministries Fund, and then support all the other ministries like ASP that flow out of “the church”. I was recently reminded that WE are the church; this place is where we meet. My hope and prayer is that we don’t limit what God can do with our resources. Join me in putting first things first, then let’s “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can”. (John Wesley). Amen and Thank You.

## ASP BISTROS ARE BACK!



ASP Bistro dinners are opportunities for the everyone to enjoy fellowship, breaking bread together, and meeting and supporting your ASP volunteers with gifts of time, talents, and resources. Please plan to join us for a delicious homemade meal, including yummy desserts!

We can use your help with setup, serving, cooking, baking or cleanup, regardless of which church group(s) you belong to.

See the sign-up sheets in the Narthex if you can help, or contact Gloria Stephan at 412-996-9274 or [gstephan57@gmail.com](mailto:gstephan57@gmail.com).



**There will be three Bistros on Sundays, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>.** Meals are served from 4:30PM to 6PM. You can dine in (Susanna Wesley room), or you can order take-out, and there will be a gluten-free option each week.

### **Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> - You had me at Pasta!**

Penne Pasta, Tossed Salad, Bread, Dessert

### **Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup> – Do-Re-Mi-Fa-So-La....sagna!**

Various varieties of Lasagna, Salad, Bread, Dessert

### **Sunday, March 17<sup>th</sup> – Got Beef?**

Roast Beef, Potatoes, Salad, Bread, Dessert

**Cost is a free-will donation, you decide.**

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Our ASP Summer Trip is scheduled for

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

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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**Help First Bethel United Methodist Church  
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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-3375/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!



## FBUMC MEN'S GROUP

The next meeting for the Men's Group will be Saturday, March 2nd at 8:30AM in Founders Hall at the church.

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## MARTHA CIRCLE

Martha Circle will meet on Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup> in the Susanna Wesley room of the church. All ladies are welcome. See Donna Hennen for more information.

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## SECOND-MILE GIVING

OUR MARCH FOCUS MINISTRY IS OUTREACH

OUTREACH includes, but is not limited to, non-perishable food donations to SHIM (South Hills Interfaith Movement)

*Although we focus on a specific ministry each month for second mile giving, **the best way to support all the ministries of First Bethel is directing your donations to the General Ministries Fund.** Most importantly, give as God directs you.*

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## LOST & FOUND

LOST  
&  
FOUND



Are you missing a coat, a travel mug or something else? Check the Lost & Found bin on the shelf in the coat closet located in the Narthex behind the Church Library.

We currently have a men's leather coat, a woman's denim jacket, a child's jacket and a few other items that have been left behind.



# 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)**

***March 2024***

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