



First Bethel Church  
King's Light Newsletter



2026



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
THOUGHTS FROM  
PASTOR DAVID

Happy May First Bethel friends! May is such a beautiful month! Trees are leafing out, flowers are emerging from the ground, grass is turning green. This is all taking place in the glow of Jesus' resurrection we are still celebrating. First Bethel is a healthy church – so it makes this time of year even more enjoyable – as we see fruits of resurrection in our work together as a church.

I have covered a handful of elements that need to be in place for a church to be most healthy. In this installment, I'd like to share about pastoral care, house calls, and the communication that surrounds this. Much has changed over the past generation or two.

Two generations ago, regular house visits from the pastor were part of typical church life. Today's younger generation holds a different perspective regarding "home." Privacy is expected and schedules are terribly busy, which may make a house visit feel intrusive. Some desire to be visited in the hospital, and some are horrified with the thought of the pastor coming to visit when in a hospital gown, along with the possibility of not having showered. Some welcome Christian fellowship during these times and others desire complete privacy.

Pastors have become busier. Over the last fifty to seventy-five years, church budgets have become significantly smaller due to smaller membership. Very few churches budget for a dedicated visitation pastor and the one pastor the church does have now has many hats to wear, including planning for ministry and financial sustainability.

With these given dynamics, you may ask, "Is there place for home-visit pastoral care? The answer is yes – very much so!

Through all these changes, a church must extend pastoral care to those who desire it, but in keeping with the current church landscape. For there to be good health in this area, there must be clear & direct communication. The unhealthiest dynamic is the assumption a pastor knows when a congregant wants/needs a pastoral care visit – whether at home or hospital. The healthiest dynamic, in this context, is when congregants feel free to call the pastor directly to ask for a visit.

Friends at First Bethel, never hesitate to call if you would like a pastoral visit. I will always accommodate that ask, no matter how busy I may be. This includes a call for spiritual counseling or for prayer regarding illness or serious medical condition. I love the First Bethel church and desire to help you connect with God while on life's journey – when on the mountain or during a season in the valley.

Journeying & Serving With You,

***Pastor David***



The Trustees request your help with

## **CHURCH CLEANUP DAY**

on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>

**Starting at NOON**

Rain or Shine!

Concentrating on INDOOR spring cleaning (windows, stairwells, pews, etc.) and OUTDOOR debris removal.

**Mulch will be done at a later date**

All ages welcome!

# WORSHIP SCHEDULE



## SUNDAYS

### 9:30AM WORSHIP

*WITH CHILDREN'S MESSAGE &  
WORSHIP ENRICHMENT*

*COMMUNION IS HELD THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH*

### 10:45AM SUNDAY CLASSES

#### 10:45AM WIRED WORD ADULT DISCUSSION

*Children are welcome to stay in the sanctuary with their families. We have "Busy Bags" filled with engaging items available at the back of the church. Additionally, children ages three through third grade can join Charlene Phillips for Worship Enrichment after the Children's Message. For those who prefer, there is a furnished Nursery area upstairs.*

*If you need more information, feel free to ask an Usher or a Greeter or anyone with an "Ask Me" nametag.*

HAPPY   

   *Happy Birthday*  
TO YOU

WISHING YOU A BLESSED DAY!

May 1 Thaddeaus Smith

May 2 Erin Doman

May 2 Jim Finlay

May 2 Traci Zahniser

May 3 Gloria Stephan

May 8 Rex Martin

May 9 Jacob Guzek

May 9 Lucas Guzek

May 10 Haleigh Finale

May 11 Sally Irick

May 12 Amy Beck

May 12 Jeffrey Jubach

May 13 Peg Albright

May 13 Lea Cook

May 15 Stephanie Alstadt

May 16 Shauna Bowser

May 17 Cindy Cingel

May 18 Jeff Leonhardt

May 18 Brenda Sullivan

May 23 Jim Walter

May 25 Angela Carney

May 25 Graham Jubach

May 27 Michael Doman

May 27 Patty Krause

May 27 Joshua Zahniser

May 29 Lainey Campbell

May 31 Marianne Wade

HAPPY  
*Mother's*  
Day 

IN  
*Loving*  
MEMORY



Christian Sympathy is extended to the family and friends of two First Bethel members who passed away recently.  
Arrangements were private.

### **IRENE RUFFING**

**November 13, 1932 – April 11, 2026**



Irene N (Tarr) Ruffing, 93 of Bethel Park was the daughter of the late Francis Tarr and Agnes Tarr Theis and the stepdaughter of the late Harry Theis. She was the beloved wife of the late Donald J. Ruffing; loving mother to Dorene, Donald (Lynne) and Timothy; sister to Betty Resnik; and grandmother to Hayley, Matthew, Kevin, and Sean. [Irene Ruffing obituary](#)

### **DONALD J. RUFFING, SR.**

**January 22, 1933 – November 18, 2025**



Donald J. Ruffing, Sr., 92, of Bethel Park, passed away peacefully on November 18, 2025. He was the beloved son of the late John and Lillian Ruffing, and husband of Irene Ruffing.

[Donald J. Ruffing Sr. obituary](#)



## **LEARN MORE ABOUT PLANNED GIVING AND FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP**

**Saturday, May 30<sup>th</sup> at 9AM**

The United Methodist Foundation of Pennsylvania provides responsible funds management for churches and agencies, enables planned giving through which individuals can support Christian ministries, and offers education and support in financial stewardship and leadership.

**Attend this worthwhile event to learn more about how the Foundation can support you in reaching your charitable goals and guide you in tailoring your gift plan to impact mission and ministry in Pennsylvania.**

The Presenter will be Barry Robison, Director of Relationships and Stewardship Development for the United Methodist Foundation of Pennsylvania

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## **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**



**Join us for another exciting  
Vacation Bible School!**

**Monday, July 27<sup>th</sup> to Thursday, July 30<sup>th</sup> 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM**

There will be fun activities, worship, crafts, Bible lessons, and fellowship for children 3 years (potty trained) through rising 5th graders. Registration will launch soon.

Contact Catherine Taylor or Melissa Smith for more details or ways you can volunteer. We can't wait to see you there!

# CHURCH LIBRARY NEWS



## Books of Perseverance

### **HEARTLAND: A forgotten place, an impossible dream and the miracle of Larry Bird**

Larry was “one of the Bird boys” in his late teens in the little town of French Lick, Ind. He had an ordinary job, and then coaches convinced him to enroll at a college much smaller than the one he had quit. This became one of America’s greatest sports stories. Bird led the underdog Indiana State Sycamores to the NCAA national championship game. He was a major collegiate star and went on to become a superstar with the NBA’s Boston Celtics. The publisher said he was “one of the greatest players ever to pick up a basketball.” Bird didn’t talk much in public during his years on the courts. He avoided press conferences and interviews, often described as shy and introverted. The subtitle of this book tells his story. The author is Keith O’Brien, whose bestsellers include *Charlie Hustle: The rise and fall of Pete Rose and the last glory days of baseball*. A Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reviewer said, "Heartland fires on all cylinders because it is incredibly well-researched."

### **BECOMING ODYSSEA: Adventures on the Appalachian Trail**

Jennifer Pharr Davis grew up in North Carolina mountain country and enjoyed walking in the woods. At age 21, just out of college, Jennifer knew she must face the challenge of hiking on the Appalachian Trail. It’s 2,198 miles long - from Georgia to Maine. She did it, by herself. Hiking became her journey, her odyssey, and she adopted Odyssea as her trail name. This book – donated to our Library - has been called a story of "self -discovery, perseverance, faith and the relationship between humanity and nature." A review in Blue Ridge Outdoors magazine said Jennifer’s “tales are full of adventures and inspiration.” Eventually, she walked three times on the entire Appalachian Trail and has hiked on trails around the world. Hall of Fame distance runner David Horton said, “Reading this book will motivate you to seek challenges in your life. (Jennifer) certainly did. She didn’t shy away from the demanding day-after-day physical, mental, and emotional toll that thru-hiking can take on an individual.”





# ASP SUMMER TRIP

by Gloria Stephan



Our 19 ASP volunteers will be traveling to **Buchanan County, Virginia** and will be staying at the Mountain Mission High School in Grundy, VA. These are our volunteers:

Ayden Bowser, Grayson Bowser, Alexandra Cecala, Sarah Combs, Samantha Combs, Melissa Combs, Ken Courtney, Lisa DiGorio, Claire Garfold, Lisa McDermot, James Morrow, Robert Pugh, Justin Reilly, Samuel Reilly, Thaddeaus Smith, Zofia Smith, Gloria Stephan, Michael Taylor and Kevin Weigold.

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Check out the ASP Construction Tree in the lobby! It contains tags requesting things we can use for our trip. Please take a tag and return the requested item by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Choose a specific item to donate, or choose a monetary donation towards our expenses. You can always add ASP to your offering envelope, send a check to First Bethel, or give online. No gift is too small.

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Our ASP team will be selling Peanut Brittle and Peanuts from the Texas Roadhouse at the Men's Plant sale on Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>.



Proceeds will benefit our ASP fund, so stop by and check it out!

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See ASP's website. <https://asphome.org/summer/#learn-more> or contact Gloria Stephan for more information.



ASP's new Appalachian Highlands Volunteer & Training Center in Johnson City, TN will serve volunteers, groups, and families in the Central Appalachia community for years to come.

First Bethel UMC has participated in ASP for 25 years and we have an opportunity to sponsor a laser-engraved brick to be installed at this new facility, honoring the people, relationships, and our shared commitment to serving Appalachian families.

There are two options:

- \$250 for a 4" X 8" BRICK which will have up to four (4) lines of text laser-engraved, maximum of 17 characters per line.
- \$400 for a 8" X 8" BRICK with up to five (5) lines of text laser-engraved, maximum of 17 characters per line, including



**If you'd like to contribute to the cost of a brick in honor of First Bethel, please mark your donation "ASP Brick".**

Any excess donations will remain in our ASP fund towards future mission trips.

# FISH MINISTRY



**FISH** is **Fun** In the **South Hills**  
on **Wednesdays 3:30 PM – 5:30 PM**

*Snacks, Games, Crafts & Homework Help  
Come Join Us!!!*

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## ISABELLE'S BASKET CHALLENGE

### FUNDRAISER FOR FISH



Sponsor Isabelle by donating any amount for each basket she sinks in one hour!

(She's already proven she can do more than 140!) Sign up in the lobby.

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## MELTING POT MINISTRIES



Is asking if we can help prepare and serve meals to children weekdays between 3:30PM – 5:30PM at their location at 5811 Curry Road. This is due to a funding shortfall.

Please contact Mary Courtney if you can help

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## RED LETTER LIVING BIBLE STUDY



This Bible study led by Rev. Joel Garrett is back! Join him Tuesdays at 6:30PM in the Oxford Room.

Starts on April 28<sup>th</sup> and continues through June 2<sup>nd</sup>



We want to honor our First Bethel graduates.

Let us know if you are graduating from High School, Technical School,

We don't want to miss the chance to say CONGRATULATIONS!

Contact the Church Office at 412-835-0700 or via email at [FBUMC@Verizon.net](mailto:FBUMC@Verizon.net).

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## CLEARANCES WORKSHOPS



Our Safe Sanctuary policy requires all adults engaging with youth or children to maintain up-to-date clearances.

There will be two workshops to assist you in acquiring these necessary documents.

Volunteers will be available in the Oxford Room with laptops during these times:

**Saturday, May 9th from 9AM-11AM**

**(during the Plant Sale)**

**Saturday, May 30th at 10:30AM**

**(After the United Methodist Foundation seminar)**

Contact the Church Office if you need to check the status of your clearances, or if you need information about which clearances you need, and how to obtain them.

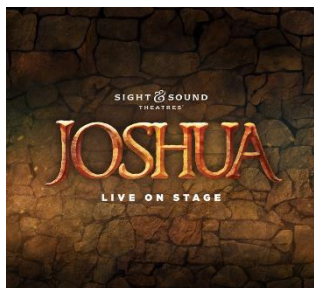
# FIRST BETHEL MEN'S GROUP



The next Men's Group meeting is Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 8:30AM. The men also gather informally for breakfast on Wednesdays around 9AM at the Eat 'N Park in South Park Shops.

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## JOSHUA – LIVE ON STAGE



Please contact Dave Miller or add your name to the signup sheet in the lobby if you're interested in a trip to see "**Joshua Live on Stage**" at the Sight and Sounds Theater in Lancaster, PA.

Date to be determined.

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## MEN'S RETREAT



### OCTOBER 9-11

at Laurelville Retreat Center, Mt. Pleasant PA, led by Rev. Joel Garrett.

Activities begin with dinner at Nino's restaurant on Route 31 around 5PM. All meals are provided on Saturday and Sunday. Lodging is in the Fernheim cabin, and you'll need to bring your bedding, towels, and toiletries.

Sign up in the lobby if you're interested, and see Ken Williams if you have any questions. Cost is \$120



**SATURDAY, MAY 9<sup>TH</sup>**  
**8AM – 1PM**

- Vegetable plants including Tomatoes of many types including Heirloom and Hybrid varieties
  - Bell and Jalapeno Peppers
  - Herbs
  - Houseplants
- Perennial and Annual flowers (including many that are deer-resistant)

**Sponsored by our Men's Group**

**Proceeds will benefit our various ministries**

# MARTHA CIRCLE



Martha Circle is a time for the ladies to be together for fellowship, service and connecting with other women of our faith community.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 13<sup>th</sup> at 1PM.

Contact Donna Hennen or Lea Cook for more information.

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The Youth Group had a fun afternoon at TopGolf in Bridgeville on April 18<sup>th</sup>, but nobody shared their scores with us!

Thanks to our trusty chaperones who made sure everyone had fun.



The Youth sponsored making a dozen College Care Packages that were sent to our students as they prepare for Finals. Thanks to everyone that helped to fill the boxes with delicious snacks and stress relief items (is that redundant?).



Senior High Sunday School with Pastor David will be held on Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at **5PM at the parsonage**

## **MAY 2026 SPECIAL DAYS**

National Day of Prayer — May 7, 2026

Mother's Day — May 10, 2026

Ascension of the Lord — May 14, 2026

Armed Forces Day — May 16, 2026

Day of Pentecost — May 24, 2026

**Wear RED to church on Pentecost!**

Memorial Day — May 25, 2026

Trinity Sunday — May 31, 2026

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## **First Bethel Mission Statement**

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

# STAY CONNECTED !



You're missing out if you didn't download the new **MyUCD** app!

The app contains family photos and contact information for the church and our congregation, **as well as access to weekly announcements, online giving, and the church calendar.** Each personal household code can be used by the whole family.

**More than just a Directory**

**Staff**  
Connect with staff quick & easy, You can link to staff listed on your website and social media

**Call Us**  
Set a quick link to your church phone number for simple click to call

**Online Giving**  
Link to your service for taking online donations

**YouVersion Bible**  
Link to the scripture verse your church is reflecting upon

**Watch Services**  
Link to your videos (using your YouTube, Vimeo, or set a link to watch live through social media)

**Email Us**  
Set a quick link to your church email

**Calendar**  
Link to your church calendar (set a link to your church google calendar or the calendar system you use)

**Announcements**  
Link to your announcements (news & events) through your website or social media

**Directory**  
Link to your online directory for members to easily access

**Custom Button**  
Create your own custom button for a service related to your church

**Social Media**  
Set links to your social media

CHURCH OF MO APP

Staff, Watch Services, Email Us, Call Us, Announcements, Calendar, Online Giving, YouVersion Bible, Directory, Spiritual Church Directory, Prayer Requests, App Store, Visit Church Website, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter

Contact the Church Office at 412-835-0700 or email [FBUMC@Verizon.net](mailto:FBUMC@Verizon.net) if you have any questions. Office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 7AM – 5PM. Remember to keep us updated if you have a new phone number, mailing address or email so we can keep our records updated.



# 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 submitted on time to avoid the disappointment of not having it appear in the next edition. Send via email to Gloria Stephan, editor or send 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)

**May 2026**

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