



First Bethel Church
King's Light Newsletter

AUGUST

2026

FROM THE HEART

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
THOUGHTS FROM PASTOR DAVID



Sunday Worship at First Bethel is in the middle of a summer worship series I have called “Rock of Ages (Cleft for Me).” It has been an enjoyable ride thus far and it seems most are enjoying the use of songs borrowed from the Classic Rock genre to provide springboards into various issues of the Christian Faith. Reading about faith-driven inspiration behind popular rock songs has been interesting and inspirational.

This immersion in music has renewed my interest in Contemporary Christian Music. Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) is music written, produced & performed by musical artists that use their musical gifts and abilities for the express purpose of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. I began consuming CCM music with passion in 1985, purchasing CD’s and attending concerts often.

I thought it would be fun to use this space in the King’s Light to share about the musical artists/bands that provided the marking points of CCM music: what inspired them to begin and how they changed the musical genre.

The CCM movement was birthed in 1972 when a song writer and performer, Larry Norman, asked the question in song, “Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music?” The reception of this song solidified Norman as the “‘Father’ of Contemporary Christian Music” even as the song created hot debate about what genres of music were appropriate for Christian consumption. Just as Rock & Roll needed a controversial figure to forge a new music genre (Elvis!), so did the Christian Rock genre. It had it in Larry Norman. Upon graduation from high school in 1965, he was awarded a full academic scholarship at San Jose State

University. As his true interest was music and not academia, he flunked out in his freshman year and lost his scholarship. Soon after, he had a powerful spiritual encounter that threw him into a frenzy of indecision about his life and for the first time in his life, he received what he understood to be the Holy Spirit.

When Norman shares his faith, via conversation or song, it is completely bereft of the filter needed to conform to a standard most of American Christianity established as accepted as “Christian” decorum. This positioned him as a rebel and one prone to controversy. He was branded a rebel. But he was overwhelmingly received by the burgeoning Jesus Music movement. His commercial success skyrocketed, bestowing upon him the title the “Father of Christian Rock.” His music addressed a wide range of social issues such as politics, free love, the occult, and religious hypocrisy. His music recordings



spanned the years 1969 to 2007. His most popular songs, in addition to the one already mentioned above, were: “Why Don’t You Look into Jesus,” “Soul on Fire,” “Righteous Rocker,” and “The Man from Galilee.”

Reading about his life certainly is thought provoking. A documentary about his life was done by filmmaker David Di Sabitino, titled “Fallen Angel: The Outlaw Larry Norman. It is available on many streaming services. Check it out. Come and worship this summer as we affirm who our “Rock of Ages” is. See you in Church!

Journeying Together,

Pastor David



Senior High Sunday School with Pastor David will be held on **Sunday, August 16th at 5PM at the parsonage.**

SUMMER SUNDAYS



SUNDAYS

9:30AM WORSHIP

10:45AM WIRED WORD

ADULT DISCUSSION

10:30AM COFFEE HOUR AND FELLOWSHIP

COMMUNION IS HELD THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH



ROAD TRIP WITH GOD

Thanks to everyone that made our Vacation Bible School a success! A special shout out to Catherine Taylor and Melissa Smith for organizing and keeping everyone on track.

The theme verse this year is ***"The Lord your God is with you wherever you go"*** from Joshua 1:9. The week included Bible stories, songs, crafts, snacks and recreation all around the theme of journeys. Each day we focused on Mile Markers reminding us God is with us on the journey, when we go off course, when we're joyful or lonely, near and far away, in other words, ALWAYS.



Aug 1 Emma Slater

Aug 1 Ken Williams

Aug 3 Amy Scott

Aug 3 David Zahniser

Aug 4 Heather Finale

Aug 6 Shannon Evans

Aug 6 Brynn Rinehart

Aug 11 Greg Doman

Aug 11 Betsy Yetiskul

Aug 13 Connie Rush

Aug 16 Ryan Melber

Aug 16 Sidney Steinhagen

Aug 16 Dorrie Walter

Aug 19 Linda Jack

Aug 19 Jeff Krause

Aug 21 Grace Passios

Aug 21 Julia Pauline

Aug 25 Carol Austin

Aug 25 Grayson Bowser

Aug 25 David Miller

Aug 26 Jaime Gray

Aug 26 Linda Kennedy

Aug 27 Celina Rae Scabilloni

Aug 31 Lisa McDermot

ERIK SCHLUTZ

September 8, 1969 – July 4, 2026 (age 56)



Erik R. Schlutz, of Whitehall, passed away unexpectedly at home, on Saturday, July 4, 2026, age 56, loving father of Lexi Schlutz (Michelle Tomczak, Lexi's mother), beloved son of Russell and Lorna Schlutz, brother of David S. Schlutz, DMD (Kelly), Uncle of Brenya, Keira and Aiden. Erik received his master's degree in finance at IUP where he was a proud brother of the Sig Tau Fraternity.

He enjoyed weightlifting and staying physically fit.

Contributions may be made in Erik's name to a charity of one's choice. Arrangements handled by the David J. Henney Funeral Home. Library, PA.

<https://www.davidhenneyfuneralhome.com/obituary/Erik-Schlutz>

We are called to prayer for Russ & Lorna Schlutz as they grieve the sudden passing of their beloved son Erik. Our hearts also go out to his daughter Lexi, brother David, and all their family and friends during these difficult days.

A Memorial Service will be held at

First Bethel UMC 5901 Library Road Bethel Park

Saturday, August 15 at 11AM



OUTREACH

These First Bethel ladies spent a day at the UMCOR Mission Barn in New Castle on Thursday, July 9th. Stephanie, Sally, Zofia and Annabell spent their day building several portable sections of handicap ramps that can be assembled on site, and then reused in another location when needed.



Compelled by Christ, the Mission Barn works to alleviate human suffering and advance hope and healing on behalf of the people called United Methodist.

Led by Director Katie Peterson, this important work is made possible in part by Connectional Apportionment dollars.



A Member of the UMCOR
Relief Supply Network



SWIM Lessons

by Brynn Rinehart

Hello First Bethel! I have been tasked with providing an update regarding our **Summer With Inclusive Meals** program, **SWIM** for short. This past winter we started discussing the possibility of providing meals at Parkford outside the Kids Meal Network. Long before we knew that South Park no longer qualified for government meal assistance programs; we estimated we would feed about 30 people per meal. For SWIM's first two weeks that proved to be a good estimation, averaging about 26 people. Our first two week's effort did not go unnoticed or unappreciated as by our third week we averaged 35 people per meal. At one of our first SWIM meetings we planned to serve meals for two hours, from 1-3PM. The second week we revised our schedule to a 90 minute window when we recognized a majority of diners come before 2:15PM.

It has been such a pleasure getting to know the residents of Parkford these first few weeks of SWIM. Miss Ellie is one of those residents. She is a diabetic who bakes desserts for us to share with her neighbors at SWIM. There is a Parkford resident with a bearded dragon who has trained me to pick any dandelion I see on the grounds as a tasty snack for her lizard. As we continue to meet new residents and feed new faces we see and hear the residents' needs and they are vast and they are growing. It is still too early to tell if our number of diners will continue to grow. But everyone in the United States in 2026 can attest to the rising cost of everything. SWIM will start providing toiletries and hygiene kits in July. Through SWIM we will continue to engage with the Parkford residents to help guide and strengthen our mission to serve the community.

SWIM has seen a tremendous reduction in food waste as compared to prior years with the Kids Meal Network. Although our menus can't please everyone every time, we have been able to feed many more people by removing the age restriction. Now

that SWIM feeds adults we have a lot less picky and a very grateful new demographic. Twice we've been able to serve fresh salads, which are very popular. Our fruit selection is a vast improvement over our Kids Meal Network's offering. SWIM has served an assortment of berries and melons, along with mandarin oranges and apple sauce. We watch these being enjoyed in real time. The Kids Meal Network required everyone get the same items but at SWIM it is "take what you want" which results in a lot less food waste.

God has been great to SWIM these first few weeks. We have yet to run out or needed to turn anyone away. SWIM is always looking for easy and affordable (moderately healthy) menu items like entrees or side dishes. If you are interested in checking out SWIM we'd love to have you serve with us! We are serving meals Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays through August 21st. Volunteers are needed at Parkford from 12:30-3pm; just 2.5 hours. If you prefer to cook and would rather not serve we can also sign you up for a day to cook. You'll also have input on what to make for the meal. You can contact Pastor David, Brynn Rinehart, or Lisa Rulong, take your pick!

SWIM has been the highlight of my weeks this summer. I was initially worried about how overwhelming feeding dozens of people three times a week would be. But so far there have not been any overwhelming moments. It has been a joy working with both our First Bethel volunteers and Parkford residents. Time flies at SWIM, it is my favorite form of communion. Volunteering for SWIM has reemphasized how much grace, kindness, and support all of us are given when we show up. The smiles and shows of appreciation at SWIM are plentiful. Again, God is great and if any of these words have inspired you, please come and SWIM with us!

SWIM takes place on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 1PM to 3PM at Parkford Apartments in South Park through August 21st.



HERE AM I, SEND ME!

by Gloria Stephan



I've followed Carson Tucker's "Road Dawg" blog on Facebook throughout the summer. Carson works for ASP with a fancy title of "Director of Donor Engagement," but he is as down-to-earth as anyone you'll meet. Justin Reilly, who joined our summer trip with his son Samuel, works in the same group and shares that same genuine spirit.

Reading Carson's weekly reports transported me back to the mountains, as though I were traveling with him while he logged hundreds of miles, visited several ASP centers each week, hung out with volunteers and summer staff, and shared stories about the projects, people, and animals he encountered. His stories felt so familiar, and I laughed out loud at some of his descriptions of the situations and characters he found along the way.

His deep gratitude for being part of this remarkable ministry also resonated with me, because I feel the same way and I know others do as well.

Here's an excerpt Carson's report last week when he served as a volunteer in Wyoming County, West Virginia at the Guyan Valley center with eight other ASP staff and alumni.

"We laughed harder than we've ever laughed, we loved in a way we forgot was possible. The week was full of purpose, accomplishment, service, and a reminder of why we are here. I am grateful for Appalachia Service Project, a connector of people and visions here to do what good we can. I'm grateful for the THOUSANDS of volunteers, donors, staff, homeowners, prayers, and members of the ASP family that made this week possible for me and everyone who has experienced this ministry."

I can't say it any better than that.

At the July Council meeting, we discussed some of the many gifts of time, talent, service, and broader support that make the ASP ministry possible each year. Council asked me to share some of those examples here. Funding is certainly important—especially because we rely on designated gifts rather than the general operating budget—but this ministry depends on far more than money.

Donated and Sponsored Support

- ◆ **Fundraisers and meals:** Food donations supported four ASP Bistro fundraiser dinners, and our Men's Group provided \$420 to sponsor the Roast Beef Dinner.
- ◆ **Volunteer and supporter appreciation:** Donated thank-you cards helped us acknowledge supporters, while bandanas were provided for our volunteers.
- ◆ **Trivia Night gifts:** Local businesses donated gift baskets for our silent auction, including Auto Zone, Bethel Bakery, Bruster's, Dairy Queen, Eat 'N' Park, Evey Hardware, Moe's, Pasta Too, Pet Supplies Plus, and Wallace Florist.
- ◆ **Worksite and travel supplies:** Construction Tree donations included merchant gift cards for fuel, worksite needs, and lunch supplies. We also received drill bits, Ziploc bags, construction trash bags, sports drinks, cookies, chips, and bottled water.
- ◆ **Trip sponsorships:** Direct gifts helped cover van rentals, adult and youth volunteer fees, travel-day meals, and ice cream outings.
- ◆ **Discounted rental:** A church member secured a Friends and Family rate for our Enterprise vans, saving us \$845 beyond the ASP corporate rate.
- ◆ **Insurance coverage:** Church Mutual provides liability coverage for the rental vans under our policy.
- ◆ **ASP stock shares:** Friends, families, businesses, and another church contributed \$1,900 through ASP "stock shares".
- ◆ **Group leader support:** Group leaders personally covered additional costs for fuel, highway tolls, extra snacks, and lunch supplements.

ASP ADULT FALL WEEKEND TRIP

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15TH – SUNDAY OCTOBER 18TH



Contact Gloria Stephan soon if you're interested in joining us on our weekend of service in Jonesville Virginia. Adults 18 and older with current clearances are welcome to join us on the porch.

Thank You

Dear First Bethel UMC,



Thank you so much for your week of service in Buchanan County! You have played a significant role in making homes warmer, safer and drier in central Appalachia. More than that, thank you for your kindness and hospitality this week. We hope that you all have been transformed by ASP's ministry in positive ways. Your kindness and hospitality is what makes ASP so special. Thank you for contributing to that in so many amazing ways. We hope to see you again in Central Appalachia!

- 2026 Buchanan County Virginia ASP Staff

FROM FIRST BETHEL'S CHICKEN

"Cluck Cluck Cluck!"

I am happy to announce the date of the 2026 Bethel Park/Upper Saint Clair Rotary Chicken BBQ. It will take place on:



**Chicken
BBQ**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17TH
AT BETHEL PARK HIGH SCHOOL
DRIVE THROUGH ONLY**

This year, I am asking a huge favor of those who can. And what is that favor? (sigh) I am hoping that those who can and those who feel comfortable doing so will help me sell these tickets.

Please remember that the large ticket sales from this Chicken lead the Rotary to give TNC their \$5,000 Grant. The Grant is then used for the Sister Rut Scholarship Fund to enable young older teens in Nyadire, Zimbabwe to seek higher education.

Perhaps you can tell your neighbors about it. Perhaps you can tell your co-workers about it. In your promotional talk, please remember to mention that they can choose to donate tickets to the South Hills Interfaith Movement (SHIM) for folks who might otherwise not go out for dinner with their family, especially during our country's current economic state.

I appreciate what First Bethel UMC has done for this Chicken over all of these many years.

Thank you so so so so very much.

Shalom to you
Shalom my friends,

Phil Himmler





FIRST BETHEL'S LIBRARY MINISTRY

A thirst to be in service and ministry, \$20, and 400 books were the initial ingredients to First Bethel's Church Library! These ingredients were mixed together in the early 1970's to begin a great ministry that has lasted many years!

A few things have changed! **The library now has 1,770 books valued at \$28,000.** But one thing hasn't changed – the passion of a group of women that invest significant time and resources to continue this great ministry!

Check out the next page for facts about our library and the benefits of reading!



Did You Know?

- ☞ Reading is vital because it actively exercises your brain, keeping your mind sharp and lowering stress. It strengthens neural pathways and helps slow cognitive decline. It builds empathy by letting you experience other perspectives, expands your vocabulary, and improves both critical thinking and memory.
- ☞ The library is organized with a Dewey Decimal system.
- ☞ Lea Cook has all the books registered in software that can help you search books and gives you details on each one.
- ☞ The library was started by the church's Miriam Circle in the early 1970's.
- ☞ Some of the book categories include: children's books, young adult books, popular fiction, WWII, sports, humor, devotional literature, Christian living, social sciences, family matters, Methodism, other religions, Bibles, and Bible study.
- ☞ Our current Library Ministry coordinators are Donna Hennen and Lea Cook.
- ☞ During Covid social distancing measures (when the church and library were closed), contact-free book deliveries were made to individual's homes!



CHURCH LIBRARY NEWS

Additions to our Library in July include these titles:



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: THE BIG BOOK

A chance meeting in 1935 between two alcoholics—Bill Wilson, a New York stockbroker, and Bob Smith, a surgeon based in Akron, Ohio—led to the organization of Alcoholics Anonymous. The pair developed the 12-step program and began working with other alcoholics, helping them achieve sobriety one day at a time. In 1939, they published "The Big Book," one of the bestselling books of all time and a lifeline to millions worldwide. Only this original 1939 edition includes all 29 stories of the program's pioneers, which share the details of their full journey to sobriety, including initial recovery, sometimes followed by relapse, and eventual success. This edition also features the key to the solution claimed by Bill Wilson: a vital spiritual experience that allows followers to rediscover, or discover, God.

WHISTLER

In our latest novel by Ann Patchett, two adults look back at the choices they made, and the choices made for them. The book follows a 53-year-old high school English teacher who unexpectedly reconnects with her former stepfather after more than 40 years apart. Other Patchett books on our shelves are Tom Lake, The Patron Saint of Liars, State of Wonder, Commonwealth and Bel Canto.

THE THINGS WE NEVER SAY

This novel is by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Elizabeth Strout. The story centers on Artie Dam, a beloved 57-year-old high school history teacher living in a coastal town in Massachusetts. On the surface, his life seems idyllic; he has a stable 30-year marriage, a tight-knit community, and spends his weekends sailing. However, underneath this perfect exterior, he battles a profound, suffocating sense of isolation. We also have Elizabeth's Tell Me Everything, Oh William!, Olive Kitteridge and Lucy By The Sea.

- ***Your Library Staff***

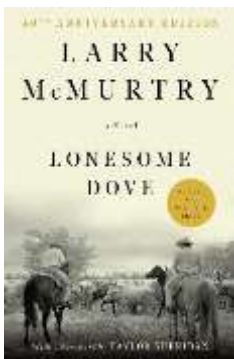
BOOK CLUB

Our Book Club delves into a wide range of books to broaden our insights and viewpoints, and sometimes just for the pleasure of enjoying a good story.



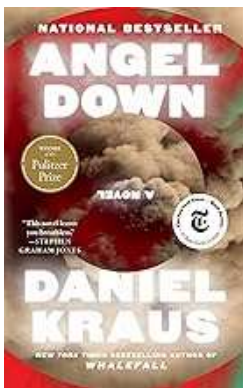
The group gathers for discussion at Panera Bread in South Park Shops once a month on a Friday evening. Here's what we're reading now.

August 28th - Lonesome Dove by Larry McMurtry



Journey to the dusty little town of Lonesome Dove, where retired Texas Rangers Augustus McCrae and Woodrow Call undertake a perilous cattle drive to the untamed plains of Montana. Along the way, they face danger, adventure, and an unforgettable cast of characters. Richly authentic and beautifully written, *Lonesome Dove* is a story of love, loss, and the unyielding spirit of the American West. This book was a Pulitzer Prize winner in 1986. 864 pages.

September 18th - Angel Down by Daniel Kraus (286 pages)



Angel Down is a 2025 novel by Daniel Kraus, a genre-bending work set during World War I that won the 2026 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. The story follows five soldiers who discover a fallen angel in No Man's Land, which becomes a catalyst for exploring themes of greed, morality, and the horrors of war, all told in a unique, single-sentence narrative style. It blends historical fiction with fantasy, horror, and magical realism, and is known for its immersive, visceral prose. 2026 Pulitzer Prize winner.



WE DID IT !!

The Air Conditioning upgrade is almost complete, and we've collected enough funds to pay the balance of the original \$47,294 amount due, with \$371 left over!

That's worth celebrating!

The only remaining expense is the electrical work needed to connect the new equipment and upgrade our system. The estimated cost is around \$6,500.

THANK YOU TO KINGS SCHOOL KIDS AND EVERYONE ELSE THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THIS PROJECT.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATE! Come out and praise God alongside your siblings in Christ at the **Southwestern District Conference, to be held on August 29th at 10AM at Garden City UMC in Monroeville..**

This will be a joyous occasion as we begin to discern how the churches of the district will work together, elect district leadership, and imagine together what the Southwestern District can be. Join us and be an active part of what God is doing in Western PA.

Peace,

Ross Pryor
Conference Superintendent



**TEACHER RECOGNITION AND
BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13TH**

It's almost back to school time! We'll be recognizing our teachers and blessing backpacks as we begin another school year. Join us on Sunday, September 13th during the 9:30AM Worship Service. There will also be an Ice Cream Social that day, with a *tentative* time of 11AM – 1PM. More later!



**CHURCH PICNIC
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH
4PM – 7PM**

(food served around 5PM)

Elm Grove Park
250 Thompsonville Road
McMurray 15317 (Peters Township)

We'll provide hamburgers, hot dogs and beverages.

Please bring a dish to share.

Sign up to let us know you're coming, or if you can help.

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE GARAGE SALE!



The Men's Group Annual Garage Sale is being held on
Saturday, September 12th

from 8AM to 2PM.

We are asking for donations of household goods, yard and garden items, sports items, etc. We cannot accept clothing, TV's, or any appliance containing Freon.

We will begin accepting donations on August 10th. If you bring the donations to the church, please let either Lisa in the office or one of the men know you are bringing them so they can be stored safely out of the way. We don't want to interfere with the daily workings of the church.

If you need your donations picked up, please contact either Jim Walter, Ken Williams, or Dave Miller and we will arrange to assist you.

Proceeds from the sale are used for supporting the church and for outreach to our local community.

Items remaining after the sale will be further donated to a local charity and put to good use. Nothing is wasted!

We hope to see you at the sale where you just might find what you didn't know you needed (or wanted).

by Jim Walter

FIRST BETHEL MEN'S GROUP



The next Men's Group meeting is Saturday, August 1st 8:30AM at the church. The men also gather informally for breakfast on Wednesdays around 9AM at the Eat 'N Park in South Park Shops.



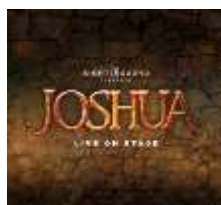
MEN'S RETREAT

OCTOBER 9-11

The Men's Group will be holding a weekend retreat on October 9th thru October 11th. It is being held at the Laurelville Retreat Center in Mt. Pleasant, PA and is being led by Rev. Joel Garrett. Lodging is in the Fernheim cabin, and you'll need to bring your bedding, towels, and toiletries.

There is a pre-retreat dinner planned for Friday evening, all other meals are included with the retreat. An enriching time (and some fun) is planned for all who attend.

There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex. See Ken Williams for more information or answers to your questions.



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.



Users of the **Universal Church Directory** *myUCD* app have reported a problem where the app requests you to re-enter your unique Household Code. The company is aware of the problem and has corrected it in the latest version of the app.

If you experience this issue, be sure to download the latest version of the app from the Apple App Store, or Google Play.

To obtain your unique Household Code again, call the church office, see the list in the Narthex near the church portrait directories, or contact Gloria Stephan.

First Bethel Mission Statement

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



First Bethel United Methodist Church

Bethel Park, Pennsylvania

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

5901 Library Road

Bethel Park, PA 15102

<http://www.firstbethelumc.org>

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FBUMC@Verizon.net



Kings School Kids

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Mobile: 412-818-0889

PastorDavid@FirstBethelumc.org

Office Manager: Lisa Stefanowicz

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 20th of each month is the due date 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 or FBUMC@Verizon.net

FIRST BETHEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

5901 LIBRARY ROAD

BETHEL PARK, PA 15102-3398

www.firstbethelumc.org

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