



First Bethel Church  
King's Light Newsletter

 April 

2026



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
THOUGHTS FROM  
PASTOR DAVID

The trunk of a tree is an amazing study of strength, stability, and sustenance! Let us consider a twelve foot tall Red Oak tree trunk that is three feet wide (diameter). Its total weight would be approximately 5,340 pounds. That is nearly equal to two Hyundai Kona automobiles! The amount of weight this tree trunk could hold up and support is 35 to 45 million pounds! It can support and stabilize a very large load.

This tree trunk is also a pipeline, carrying an abundance of water to all of the branches and leaves. Approximately thirty to fifty percent of the trunk's weight is water. Not only does the trunk bear the weight of the branches and leaves, it feeds them as well.

This tree trunk illustration provides a help in understanding an element of church finance. Typically, the majority of the church's cost structure consists of human resources (pastor & staff) and building resources (including utilities). As we know, the church is not physical building, but the building is a critical resource of the church as far as providing a "home base" for the church's ministries of worship and outreach. We can call these elements the tree trunk of the church.

The ministries of the church are its branches that grow from the trunk. In First Bethel's context the branches are Daily Bread, Worship, FISH @ Parkford, Christian Education, Appalachia Service Project, Library, et.al.. The results or fruit of these branches are the leaves that adorn the branches. It is this which gives the tree vibrancy and beauty. This vibrance and beauty "grab" much attention, while the tree trunk bears its weight and feeds it life-sustaining water. The trunk must remain healthy or

there will be nothing to hold the weight of its branches. The entire tree will perish if the trunk is not attended to.

Our church's financial health has been mostly positive the last few years as our congregation has cared for our "trunk" well. Our trunk is the church's General Ministries Fund. This is the fund that meets the operational costs which consist of staff and building costs, along with several other essential cost elements.



As I continue this series called "Healthy Church," I am taking this reminder to keep us grounded in caring for our trunk first – giving it our primary offerings. This will keep the ministry branches supported. If you find yourself in a financial position to provide over and above your General Ministries Fund offering, you might consider extra offerings for specific branches. But it is

important not to do this the other way around. Providing primarily for the branches allows the trunk to become weak and it will not have the strength to hold the entire tree up.

Let's keep up the great work First Bethel! Our tree has become a beautiful one! There are many branches and leaves that beautify the entire structure! May God bless us in this work!

Journeying together,

***Pastor David Ewing***

# WORSHIP SCHEDULE



## SUNDAYS

### 9:30AM WORSHIP

*WITH CHILDREN'S MESSAGE &  
WORSHIP ENRICHMENT*

*COMMUNION IS HELD THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH*

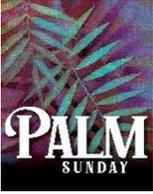
### 10:45AM SUNDAY SCHOOL

### 10:45AM WIRED WORD ADULT DISCUSSION

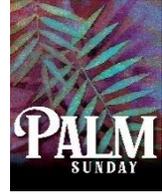
*Children are welcome to stay in the sanctuary with their families. We have "Busy Bags" filled with engaging items available at the back of the church. Additionally, children ages three through third grade can join Charlene Phillips for Worship Enrichment after the Children's Message. For those who prefer,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

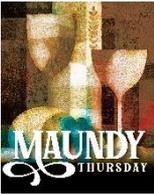
## SPECIAL SERVICES



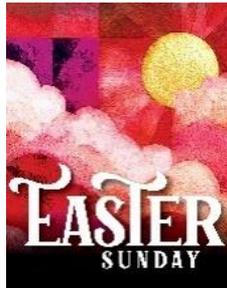
**PALM SUNDAY WORSHIP**  
**SUNDAY, MARCH 29<sup>TH</sup>**  
**9:30AM**



**HONORING RUTH FINLAY**  
**AND THE FIRST BETHEL RINGERS**



**MAUNDY THURSDAY**  
**AND**  
**GOOD FRIDAY**  
**COMBINED SERVICE**  
**THURSDAY, APRIL 2<sup>ND</sup>**  
**7:00PM**



**EASTER**  
**SUNDAY, APRIL 5<sup>TH</sup>**  
**7:00AM SUNRISE SERVICE**  
**9:30AM WORSHIP SERVICE**



Apr 1 Gary Graney

Apr 7 Todd Swan

Apr 12 Laura Ashworth

Apr 12 Linda Graney

Apr 13 Robin Cecala

Apr 13 Amy Zeminski

Apr 15 Rich Alstadt

Apr 18 Reid Stewart

Apr 21 Killian Jubach

Apr 24 Jessica Evans

Apr 24 Christina Ewing

Apr 27 Lexi Schlutz

Apr 28 Karol Snead

## Church Cleanup



The Trustees request your help with

## CHURCH CLEANUP DAY

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

**Starting at NOON**

(Rain date is May 2<sup>nd</sup>)

Help with indoor and outdoor spring cleaning.

All ages welcome!

# THE NYADIRE CONNECTION

**\$5,000 Hot Dog! Bingo!**

**For TNC AGAIN!**

Hello to the family I love - - You, First Bethel United Methodist Church!

*TNC ichagamuchira iyou Rotary's \$5,000.00 Grant muna Kubvumbi zvakare.*

*Iwe, mhuri yangu y3FB, wakabatsira zvakanyanya kuti zviitike. Ndatenda!*

I bet you could not make sense out of the above Shona words from Zimbabwe. 😊

Here's the translation:

"TNC will receive the Rotary's \$5,000 Grant in April once again. You, my First Bethel family, significantly helped make that possible. Thank you!"



Shalom,

Phil Himmler

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**The Nyadire Connection's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Event is Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5PM** at Christ United Methodist Church, 44 Highland Road in Bethel Park. Please join TNC for a sit-down buffet, silent auction, and hear more about TNC's future from its local leadership and special guests.

**Tickets are \$40 each and can be purchased at First Bethel from Stephanie Alstadt.**

# ASP SUMMER TRIP



Plans are underway for our Appalachia Service Project summer trip from June 14<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>.

First Bethel is sending 16 volunteers to Central Appalachia, and we're busy working on fundraisers and learning about the ASP mission. Check out the ASP Construction

Tree in the lobby for tags requesting items we can use for our trip.

We held four ASP Bistro fundraiser dinners during Lent, and we extend our sincere thanks to each and every person that helped with these fellowship dinners to raise money for our trip! It is only with your many donations of time, talents, gifts, service and witness that this ministry happens.

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

**MONDAY, APRIL 27<sup>TH</sup> AT 5PM**

## **MOE'S SOUTHWEST GRILL TACO MEAL KITS**

Pre-order a taco meal kit that arrives hot and ready to eat, and serves 4-6 people. You can take your kit home to enjoy, or you can stay and eat with friends in Founders Hall.

If you're a single or a couple, consider splitting a kit with someone else, or expect leftovers!



# MOE'S SOUTHWEST GRILL MEAL KIT FUNDRAISER FOR APPALACHIA SERVICE PROJECT MISSION TRIP



**Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup> 2026**

**5 PM Pickup at the Church (Founders Hall)**

**Taco Meal Kits serve 4-6 people and are**

**Hot and Ready to Eat**

***Take yours home, or stay and eat with us!***

**First Bethel United Methodist Church**

**5901 Library Road, Bethel Park, PA 15102**

**[HTTPS://PCI.JOTFORM.COM/FORM/260616013913146](https://pci.jotform.com/form/260616013913146)**



**Order Here before**

**April 23, 2026**

**\$46.01/kit**

# CHURCH LIBRARY NEWS

## FAVORITE MODERN WRITERS

By Lea Cook



Of the hundreds of books in our Church Library, certain modern authors have been the most popular with our readers. Among them are:

### **KRISTIN HANNAH**

Our 13 novels by Kristin, who lives on an island in Washington State, include:

**The Women**  
**The Nightingale**  
**The Great Alone**  
**The Four Winds**

### **MITCH ALBOM**

Among our 10 titles by this Michigan writer and talk-show host are:

**The First Phone Call From Heaven**  
**The Five People You Meet in Heaven**  
**Tuesdays With Morrie**  
**For One More Day**

### **JODI PICOULT**

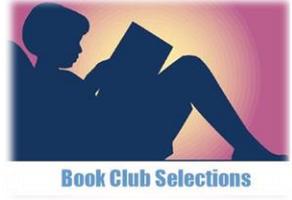
There are numerous books and short stories by Jodi, who lives in New Hampshire. Our five Jodi books are:

**The Storyteller**  
**Plain Truth**  
**Small Great Things**  
**A Spark of Light**  
**By Any Other Name**

**Your Library Staff**

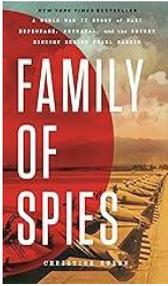
# BOOK CLUB

Our Book Club delves into a wide range of books to broaden our insights and viewpoints. The group gathers for discussions at Panera Bread in South Park Shops the third Friday of every month at 7PM. Join us sometime!



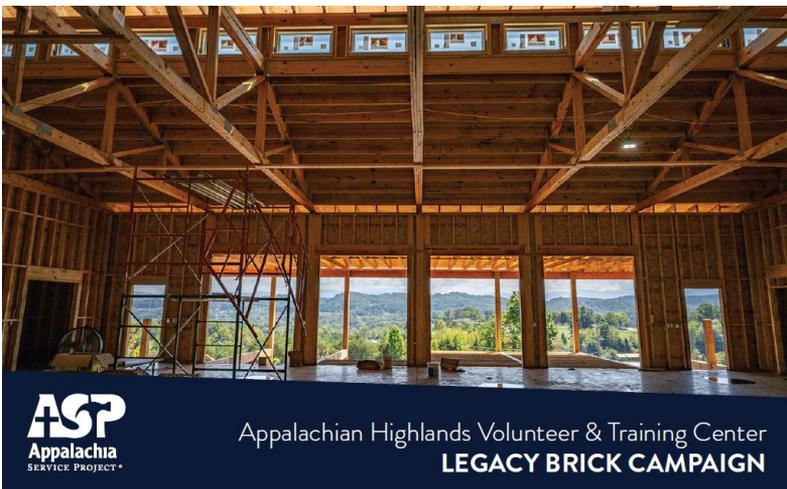
**Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup>**

## **Family of Spies: A World War II Story of Nazi Espionage, Betrayal, and the Secret History Behind Pearl Harbor**



It began with a letter from a screenwriter, asking about a story. *Your family. World War II. Nazi spies.* Christine Kuehn was shocked and confused. When she asked her seventy-year-old father, Eberhard, what this could possibly be about, he stalled, deflected, demurred, and then wept. He knew this day would come.

The Kuehns, a prominent Berlin family, saw the rise of the Nazis as a way out of the hard times that had befallen them. When the daughter of the family, Eberhard's sister, Ruth, met Nazi leader Joseph Goebbels at a party, the two hit it off, and they had an affair. But Ruth had a secret—she was half Jewish—and Goebbels found out. Rather than having Ruth killed, Goebbels instead sent the entire Kuehn family to Hawaii, to work as spies half a world away. There, Ruth and her parents established an intricate spy operation from their home, just a few miles down the road from Pearl Harbor, shielding Eberhard from the truth. They passed secrets to the Japanese, leading to the devastating attack on Pearl Harbor. After Eberhard's father was arrested and tried for his involvement in planning the assault, Eberhard learned the harsh truth about his family and faced a decision that would change the path of the Kuehn family forever.



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.



## 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!



We want to honor our First Bethel graduates.

Let us know if you are graduating from High School, Technical School, or College and we'll be in touch for the details.

Please don't assume that we know; 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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## HONORING RUTH FINLAY AND THE FIRST BETHEL RINGERS



Back in 1976, Ruth Finlay founded a bell choir, and now, fifty years later, it continues to thrive with Christina Ewing as director.

On Sunday, March 29th, we honored Ruth by dedicating handbells and chimes in her name, and the First Bethel Ringers performed special music entitled "A Blessing" by Helman, conducted by Jeff Leonhardt.



Three octaves of C bells now include a tribute to Ruth as the group's founding director. Pam Bright and Pastor David

shared heartfelt remarks about Ruth's influence and lasting legacy on behalf of all of us. **We love you Ruth!**

# FIRST BETHEL MEN'S GROUP



**MEN'S  
GROUP**

The next Men's Group meeting is Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup> at 8:30AM. The men also gather informally for breakfast on Wednesdays around 9AM at the Eat 'N Park in South Park Shops.

Please see Dave Miller or the sign up 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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**PLANT SALE**  
**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 Martha Circle meeting is scheduled for April 8<sup>th</sup> at 1PM.

Contact Donna Hennen or Lea Cook for more information.

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## SOUTH PARK DRAMA CLUB PRESENTS

### SHREK THE MUSICAL

South Park Drama Club  
presents

**SHREK**  
The Musical

April 9 - 12

South Park High School  
Drama Club Presents  
Shrek the Musical

South Park High School Drama Club presents "Shrek The Musical" featuring First Bethel's own **Ayden Bowser** in the lead role as Shrek.

Show dates are April 9 – 12, 2026. Follow @southparkdramaclub on Facebook or Instagram for more information. **Break a leg Ayden!**

Tickets are available using the link below, or contact Shauna Bowser.

<https://events.ticketleap.com/tickets/southparkdramaclub/shrek-the-musical-1313407626>

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## FISH TALES

**FISH** is **Fun** In the **South Hills**  
at **Parkford Community**

**FISH** is **Fun** In the **South Hills** at **Parkford Community**

**on Wednesdays 3:30 PM – 5:30 PM**

*Snacks, Games, Crafts & Homework Help*

*Come Join Us!!!*

# WPAUMC 2026 DISTRICT RESTRUCTURING



The District Structure Task Force was convened to assist the Annual Conference in discerning how best to

realign district boundaries and leadership structures in response to changing missional realities, clergy deployment needs, and the faithful stewardship of people and resources. Guided by the Bishop's vision and in consultation with the Cabinet and Conference leadership, the task force has focused on **recommending a reduction from ten districts to four supervisory areas**; developing district leadership models that emphasize mission, flexibility, and strong lay involvement; and identifying ways to promote greater consistency in required processes across districts, particularly those related to clergy formation and support.

This work remains in progress. The task force continues to listen carefully to feedback from clergy and laity across the Conference and to evaluate the proposed plans as they are refined. Contact the District Restructuring Task Force at

[redistricting@wpaumc.org](mailto:redistricting@wpaumc.org).

Throughout this process, the task force has prioritized transparency, equity, and clear communication, with the goal of strengthening connectional ministry and positioning the Conference for faithful and effective leadership in the years ahead.

For more details, including Task Force team members, Frequently Asked Questions, and a Projected Map and Church List, see the District Restructuring page of the Western PA United Methodist Church website:

<https://www.wpaumc.org/2026-district-restructuring>

# ONLINE GIVING UPDATE



First Bethel uses Vanco Services for secure online and electronic giving. The Western PA Conference has recently established a Preferred Partner agreement with Vanco Services, meaning our church will be able to take advantage of a **discounted rate structure**. ACH and card rates, as well as transaction fees, are now lower, and the \$10 monthly Vanco website hosting fee has been removed.

If you're interested in learning more about electronic giving, see our Vanco giving page at <https://www.firstbethelumc.org/give>

Vanco supports scheduled or one-time donations to our General Ministries Fund, and any other designated fund you select. After initial setup, your donations will be tied to your existing envelope number so you can give conveniently via check, cash or secure electronic transaction.

Call the Church Office if you have questions or need more information.

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## 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>

**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)

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