

Hilltop Highlights

A Monthly Publication of First Presbyterian Church

The Least of These

“And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are my brothers or sisters you did it to me.” Matthew 25:40

This passage comes from the classic parable of judgment that Jesus tells involving the king separating the sheep from the goats. The goats are the ones who do not minister to those in need, or maybe, do not seem to be able to recognize those in need. The sheep are the ones who do recognize those in need and step in and help. Being a parable of judgment, the sheep go on to receive their reward in heaven while the goats go off to eternal damnation. Typical parable that you have heard a thousand times before.

Of course you know the point of the parable. And of course you try to live out Jesus’ words of taking care of the least of these by the missions you support with your time and your money. You try to live out Jesus’ words by helping those in need. After all, it is far better to be a sheep than a goat. Trust me on that one.

But. But sometimes you are not given a choice. Sometimes fate has a way of dealing the cards and you do not get to choose what part you are going to play in this parable. Sometimes you don’t get to choose whether to be a sheep or a goat. Sometimes you wind up being a “least of these,” like it or not.

That was the position we found ourselves in after the storm last week. Of being a least of these. Frankly, I did not enjoy being cast in that role one little bit. I would rather be a sheep any day. But that was not where Friday found Sharon and me. We were, as Blanch DuBois would say “dependent on the kindness of strangers.”

What I did learn in my time as a “least of these” is that you need to put all those feelings of pride and guilt and helplessness behind you and learn to ask for help. Otherwise, life is going to be pretty darn hard for you. You can’t receive help unless you are able and willing to accept it. And we cannot do all things for ourselves all the time.

Secondly, I did indeed learn that the kindness of strangers that I received from my one hour old new neighbors was far more that I could have ever imagined. People are good here and generous in times of need.

Thirdly, I had it reinforced yet again what an awesome and amazing congregation that I serve who has once again more than been there when I needed you. Sharon and I can never thank each one of you enough for your love and your support this past week. You are the best.



This week was a week of sheep and goats and least of these. Which one were you?

Did you see Jesus this past week? Maybe you were Jesus to someone else? I think I might have seen him wielding a chainsaw in my backyard or bringing some food and water. Or maybe he was named Janine who walked my neighborhood with gloves in hand looking for people to help. Or maybe you saw him in the disguise of the person that you helped.

I’m not exactly sure where Jesus was this past week, but I am sure he was around. Just like he is wherever we find “the least of these.” Sometimes we just need to be hit upside the head with a tornado to notice!

Yours in Christ, Pastor Mike



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We Keep in Our Prayers

- ◆ Prayers for Gary Marks for a new kidney to become available soon.
- ◆ Prayers for Carl Seaman and his family as he begins his cancer treatments.

Bakersplus.com

Baker's is offering the community rewards program again in **2017**. You **will not** need to re-enroll. The church received **\$258.22** from the first quarter of 2017. If you have not enrolled please do, this helps us pay for various items that are not budgeted such as the new TV in the classroom downstairs and new light weight tables for the Craft Room.

Financial Information

	<u>May</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Income	\$21,322.58	\$174,828.09
Expenses	<u>\$31,342.44</u>	<u>\$173,690.74</u>
Difference	<\$10,019.86>	\$1,137.35



Happenings

STRIKEPOINT



Top Handbell Ensemble to Perform

Strikepoint, one of the world's top handbell ensembles, will be performing at **7:00 p.m.** on **Saturday, July 15th** at First Presbyterian Church (1220 Bellevue Blvd. S.) in Bellevue. Admission is free but a \$15 donation is suggested. This performance is part of the group's 2017 summer tour.

Strikepoint, from First United Methodist Church in Duluth, was established in 1984 and has been touring annually since 1986. Their travels have taken them to England, Scotland, Japan, Hong Kong, Sweden, Canada, Hawaii and throughout the mainland U.S., with performances in four national capitals. They have performed at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Disney World in Florida, and both Disneyland and the Crystal Cathedral in California. Last summer they were cultural exchange ambassadors to Växjö, Duluth's Swedish sister city, and were featured performers for that region's Minnesota Days and Karl-Oskar Days celebrations.

Strikepoint rings 6-plus octaves of bronze Schulmerich handbells, 7 octaves of handchimes, 2 octaves of Silver Melody Bells and a variety other instruments. The 11-

member directorless ensemble is unique among touring handbell groups as a combination church/community and youth/adult group. Bill Alexander, a nationally known handbell clinician and conductor, is the leader of the ensemble.

Strikepoint is noted for capturing the enthusiasm of audiences with its dynamic style and accessible music. Program selections can range from flowing Bach to a rocking Beatles tunes to a rousing Sousa march, and include both familiar and new music. Reviews of Strikepoint concerts have praised their "athleticism and showmanship, not to mention musicality" with an "exceptionally creative bent!"

Strikepoint's recordings have been featured on National and Minnesota public radio and other nationally broadcast programs. Their newest recording, *Reflections*, is "music to calm the mind and restore the spirit," and has been used for meditation, yoga and music therapy.

Strikepoint concerts are designed to delight listeners. Among the comments most frequently heard after concerts, a favorite is, "If we'd known it was going to be this good, we would have made all our friends come."



Happenings



Dave and Val Jean Hansen will have their open garden on Sunday, July 2nd from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Be sure to stop by their home at 2207 Glenwood Ave. in Papillion to see their lovely flowers!



Vacation Bible School
July 24th through
July 28th
9:00 am to Noon

High Seas Adventure



Join us for Ladies' Lunch. We are meeting on the **Fourth Thursday of each month at noon. July 27th** we'll meet at **Ruby Tuesday's** in Bellevue.

Make your reservation by calling the church office at 402-291-1104 or e-mailing admin@bellevuefpc.org.

Annual Picnic
Mark your calendar for July 30th. The Fellowship Committee will be sponsoring the annual church picnic right after the Sunday Worship Service. We will have tamales and enchiladas with sides. For those who want something different we will have hot dogs and chips. The Fellowship Committee will be serving ice cream sandwiches for dessert so no desserts are needed.



This is a free will offering event. Any questions contact Ricky Holbert at 402-291-7637 or owlybear@cox.net.

Synod School 2017



"Synod School is well organized, with inspiring worship leaders, talented instructors, and a great children's program."

July 23-28, 2017

Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa

www.lakesandprairies.org/SynodSchool
800-328-1880, ext. 207

Let Justice Flow



Summer Community Mission Outreach

Here are more opportunities to help youth in our community and collaborate with other churches in the Bellevue Faith group who partner with Bellevue Public Schools (BPS) to impact lives of students and families. Mission Committee members will be collecting items before church or asking you to sign up to help with projects.

Adopt Logan Fontenelle Middle School

We've adopted Logan Fontenelle Middle School for the next school year. Below is the list of school supplies we're collecting in July, or you can donate any amount up to \$10.00 and the Mission Committee will purchase for you. Please note school supplies on your donation.

3 Ring Binder, minimum of 2"
2 Pencils
Pocket folders
Pack of colored pencils
Bottled glue
Package of 5 tab dividers
Protractor
Composition notebooks
Flash drive

Packages of loose leaf notebook paper
Blue/Black/Red Pens
Spiral notebooks
Pair of scissors
Glue sticks
Highlighters
Ruler
Package-3 X 5 ruled note cards
Boxes of kleenex

Partner with other Bellevue Faith Community churches

July 2nd-23rd - Bring boys gently used or new clothes for the Faith Community Partners July 29th Back to School Event: These items will be collected through July 23rd and can be placed in the green tote.

size 8-12
underwear/socks
tennis shoes – men's sizes 5-7.5

July 8th Fun in the Park- Provide Saturday lunch and games in Gemini Park to kids who otherwise may not have food. Our brown bags will advertise VBS! We'll need help making and transporting lunches and monitoring games. Sign up sheets to help with this event will be available through July 2nd.

Questions? Contact Mission Committee members Anne McDaniel, Joyce Wells, Denise Seaman, Mary Bond, Gene Cash, Carole Warnes, Melissa Young. New members are welcome! Talk with us to join and participate!



Mission Committee Update

At the June meeting of the Mission Committee funds were approved to be sent to the following worthy charitable organizations, both local and international:

Bellevue Food Pantry-	\$2,000
Guatemala Clinic/Chapel Mission-	\$1,000
Stork's Nest -	\$500
Crossroads Connection-	\$500
Youth Emergency Services (Y.E.S.)-	\$500
Salvation Army -	\$500

Also, earlier this year we donated money for the Presbyterian Disaster Relief Fund-\$500 and funds to the FPC quilting group who make quilts for various charitable causes.

If you have an interest in missions please consider joining the Mission Committee. We usually meet the 1st Tuesday of every month in the Valley Vista Room at 6:00 pm. Due to the July 4th holiday the next meeting is on July 11th.

Making a Joyful Noise!

Hey folks - Mark the date

On Sunday afternoon, August 6th, we will be having our 2nd maybe annual hymn sing. There is an easel outside of the office, so if you want to request a special song, write it down. Last year I had several comments about "I wish we had sung this".

It takes a lot of time and paper putting together the booklets – we do this in order that Dirk is not constantly having to look up page numbers (in multiple hymnals). So if you want to sing something, write it down and we will do our best to find it. The cut off date will be on July 16th, so we have time to make the copies and booklets.



The Fellowship Committee will be taking orders for First Presbyterian Church Polo Shirts through Sunday, July 9th.

There will be examples of the type of shirts available. We are also able to get both women's and men's cut.

The price will be \$25 per shirt. If you have any questions ask Rick Holbert, 402-291-7637 or owlybear@cox.net. This is a prepaid



We really had a lot of fun last year with music, fellowship, and ICE CREAM! I hope that you can plan on joining us this year.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me 402-884-6697. Come join us, and we will make a Joyful Noise together!

Alice



Alice Renner



Children's Ministry



Linda Reffert

Oh, it's getting close! As I write this, VBS is just about one month away. If you are wondering if we still need your help – the answer is yes! I have a number of openings. I keep reminding myself that it always comes down to the last minute and it always works out.

But, that's more reassuring in the light of day, than when I wake up thinking about unfilled roles in the middle of the night. Our biggest need is still for Crew Leaders. It would also be really nice to have a couple more men – young or old or in between, to help that week. A number of the kids who will attend do not have a father (or big brother) living in their home and having a positive male influence at VBS could really make an impact. Plus, having guys involved in VBS automatically makes it more fun, doesn't it?!

VBS runs from Monday, June 24th through Friday, June 28th from 9 AM to Noon. Quentina Ellison has been dreaming up and creating VBS decorations. Barb Carlson, Liane Kirmis, Nancy Shultz, Jean Lindfors, June Kouba and I have been trying to help. And I've been working on preparing things for our station leaders. Our latest volunteers are Kitty Hart, who said she would do whatever I most need (bless her heart!) and Jane Hink is going to help with Registration and will be part of the Treat Team in the Kitchen.

Registrations are coming in for VBS and I expect about 75 kids again this year. I'm going to be more fair with the VBS t-shirt orders this year. For those who register by the deadline (July 10th), t-shirts in the size requested will be ordered and labeled. There will be some extra t-shirts available in random sizes for those who register late, but if you want to ensure your child gets a shirt and it's the right size – go online and register at www.myvbs.org/bellevuefpc or stop by the church and fill out a registration form no later than July 10th.

We're going to decorate the church for VBS on Sunday, July 16th right after church. We could use help of all ages, abilities and interests. And I'll be serving a light lunch to all who sign up to help. Please consider staying after church that day for an hour or two and helping!

I want to thank everyone who came and helped put together 72 hygiene kits for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance in our June Intergenerational Sunday School. We had such great help and the group whizzed through the assembly. They decided they want to try to put together TWICE as many kits next year and Mission Committee offered to sponsor 144, so watch out for us next year! Meanwhile this year's volunteer group consisted of: Jean Lindfors, Gary & Rita Sands, George Sayles, Nora, Margot & Eliza Boyd, Cindy, Abby, Christopher & Jack Reilly; JoAnne Nielsen, Quentina Ellison, Anne McDaniel, Jane Hink and Nancy Shultz.

On Sunday July 2nd from 9 to 9:45 AM we will be putting together notes and cards to go to our military members who are stationed in other states or deployed. We would love to have you join us for this worthy effort and if you have a family member serving in the military, please let me (or June in the church office) know by July 2nd.

This fall, our WOW lessons for 3rd through 6th graders will focus on World Religions. Of course, in our short lesson time we'll just touch on the basics of religions such as Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism. But if you have anything representative of the above mentioned faiths from your travels – and especially things that the kids can touch and pass around, please let me know. I would love to borrow them when the time comes. My purpose in teaching this subject is to help promote knowledge and respect of other faiths and their believers.

Finally, I just want to encourage all our kids, youth and adults who participated in our Grandparent Blessing, to remember to pray for your partner regularly throughout the summer. You are awesome!



June Youth Fellowship (YF) News



Shelli Dart

2 Corinthians 5:1 “For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.”

The Middle Schoolers, Tom & Laura Miller, John and I enjoyed 3 days of work at beautiful Camp Calvin Crest in Fremont. There was a lot of mulch work and a little time with power tools. The first day was very hot and we bumbled along trying to find a rhythm. No one quit and the next day we had figured out how to work as a team and the work flew by! We completed the work that was supposed to take all weekend by 4:30 Saturday and they had to find more work for us to do. I can not wait to share pictures and stories with all of you. It’s always such a wonderful thing to see them come together and work hard and you all should be so proud of these kiddos, I sure am.

This year was a unique trip to Calvin Crest because the storm that went through the area and split right over the camp so we did not get the brunt of it but reformed and hit Bellevue. It was hard wondering about friends and family and frankly, our own homes which were very close. Everyone maintained a great attitude and was very positive and we introduced the kiddos to “God Picked” scripture. The youth do the devotions and can use their favorite scripture or a flip through the Bible and pick a random verse. The verse listed above is from our trip to Joplin and is a God Picked verse. Let me tell you how silent we all were when they read that very relevant verse. Helping

clean up debris from the storm when we returned brought this scripture to mind a number of times.

The Senior Highs are heading to The Stewpot in Dallas. I am excited for them to experience this and look forward to sharing pictures and stories with all of you when we get back.

I hope folks can help July 8th for Fun in the Park Day. We will hand out sack lunches then play games with area children. They love playing with the big kids so please meet at the church at 11:30 to help bag up the chicken and head to Gemini Park.

VBS is the week of July 24 - 28 and youth and adult volunteers are always welcome. Please let Linda know if you are available. The theme this year is High Seas Expedition and should be a lot of fun.

Enjoy your summer break and take some time to help a neighbor.

Be a Blessing! Shelli



July Youth Events

July 8-11:30 Fun in the Park-Outreach

July 24-28 VBS High Seas Expedition



~ July 2017 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 Pantry Sunday 9a Inter-Generational Sunday School 10a Worship Service 11:30a Deacons Mtg (WVR) 7p Venture Crew 26	3 1:15p Heritage Ridge 2p Harmony Court 2:45p Richmond Vil- lage	4 Independence Day Church Office is Closed	5	6 4p Pack Lunches for Fun in the Park 7p Troop 467		8 12:45p Gemini Park Outreach Event
9 10a Worship Service	10	11 10:30a Staff Meeting (CR) 6p Mission Mtg (WVR)	12 8:45a PEO (WVR/FH) 6p Finance Mtg (Admin Ofc) 6:30p Building & Grounds Mtg (CR)	13 7p Troop 467	14	15 7p Strikepoint Handbell Concert
16 10a Worship Service 11a VBS Decorating	17 7p Venture Crew 26	18	19	20 7p Troop 467	21	22
23 10a Worship Service 11a Worship Meeting (WVR)	24 9a Vacation Bible School	25 9a Vacation Bible School	26 9a Vacation Bible School	27 9a Vacation Bible School 12p Ladies Lunch (Ruby Tuesday) 7p Troop 467	28 9a Vacation Bible School	29
30 Next Sunday Pantry Sunday 10a Worship Service 11a Annual Church Picnic (FH)	31	Notes:				



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July Birthdays:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Dawn Matthews | 19 John Wallace |
| 1 Randy Reffert | 20 Ron Lowrance |
| 3 Lila Rickel | 23 Paul Boyd |
| 4 Linda Hayton | 23 Marie Zipse |
| 8 Chuck Clark | 24 Mia Pancoe |
| 10 Carole Warnes | 24 Patrick Warren |
| 12 Shirley Hartranft | 24 Quentina Ellison |
| 12 Will Oxtoby | 25 Denny Hilfiker |
| 13 Donna Davis | 25 Rita Hurlbutt |
| 13 Betty Kieran | 26 Heather Pancoe |
| 14 Jackson Griffin | 26 Heather Glenn |
| 14 Emerson Griffin | 26 Rick Kirmis |
| 14 C. J. Keene | 27 Ivna Johnson |
| 16 Lilly Hunter | 28 Joe Medakovich |
| 18 Brian Stephan | 29 Lisa Lewis |
| 19 Gary White | 31 Marilyn Schlafman |
| 19 Tara Williams | |

