

Hilltop Highlights

A Monthly Publication of First Presbyterian Church

An “aha” Moment

“After they had listened to Herod, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.” (Mt 2:9-12)

This January 6th, like every other January 6th before, we celebrate the Epiphany. By tradition, this is the day that the wise men arrive at the manger to pay homage to the newborn Messiah. It is the revelation of Christ to the Gentiles as foretold by prophecy. And that is certainly good news to us Gentiles! But the whole idea of Epiphany carries a much deeper meaning than that.

Epiphany, which comes from the Greek word epiphaneia, means “an appearance” or “a revealing.” Since Jesus’ first followers were Jewish, the revelation of Christ to the non-Jewish magi reminds us that Jesus came to save the whole world. Symbols of Epiphany include light, a star, a crown (or three crowns) and a globe or stylized portrayal of the world. The color of Epiphany is green to symbolize life, growth, hope and eternity. On the church calendar, the season of Epiphany lasts until Ash Wednesday.

Epiphany can also mean a sudden, brilliant realization, like the light bulb over your head moment when you finally put two and two together or when you have a brilliant inspiration. Think of Isaac Newton’s epiphany when he suddenly realized that an apple falling to the earth rather than flying off into space was caused by the invisible force of gravity.

My hope and prayer for you and me as we enter into this season of Epiphany is that we will have our own personal “aha” moment. That we will discover some new insight about the God that we worship. That we will finally “see” our God in a new and exciting way. That God working in the world and in our lives will be revealed to us by people and through events that we might never have considered before. Like some foreign wise men bringing news to Herod or shepherds bringing the news to their friends.

Our God has never been one to remain hidden from us for long. It just isn’t always obvious where God may be or in which ways God may be working in our lives. But would you expect anything less from the God who chose to show strength in weakness, glory by emptying Himself of all power and wisdom in becoming a fool in the eyes of this world?

So where and through whom will the God of the Epiphany be revealed to you?

Yours in Christ, Pastor Mike



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Staff

Rev. Dr. Michael G. Elliott (Pastor)-pastor@bellevuefpc.org
M, Tu, W, Th 8:30 am to 3:00 pm

June Kouba (Church Administrator/Treasurer)-admin@bellevuefpc.org
M, Tu, W, Th 8:30 am to 3:00 pm

Linda Reffert (Children's Ministry Director)-lkreffert@aol.com
Tu, W, Th 9:00 am to 5:00 pm (hours may vary)

Shelli Dart (Youth Ministry Director)-youthdirector@bellevuefpc.org
Tu, Th 10:30 am to 3:00 pm (hours may vary)

Rob Rose (Children's Music Director)-afchap08@gmail.com

Alice Renner (Chancel Choir Director)-akrenner@cox.net

Liane Kirmis (Westminster Bells Director)-rkirmis@windstream.net

Dirk Lindner (Organist)-dirk16@cox.netE

Eric Van Sky (Financial Secretary)-eric.vansky@yahoo.com



We Keep in Our Prayers

- ◆ Prayers for Mona Klingler, sister of Sue Tabler, who is undergoing treatment for cancer.
- ◆ Prayers for Gary Marks as he awaits a new kidney.
- ◆ Prayers for Carl and Denise Seaman as Carl battles pancreatic cancer.
- ◆ Prayers for Genie Fox who is recovering after a stroke.

Bakersplus.com

Baker's is offering the community rewards program again in **2017**. You **will not** need to re-enroll. The church received **\$252.51** from the **third 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>November</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Income	\$48,198.85	\$336,876.34
Expenses	<u>\$21,025.86</u>	<u>\$340,602.99</u>
Difference	\$21,025.86	<3,726.65



New Officers for 2018

Elders

Ash Hudson
Bill Zipse
Jim Millard
Nancy Blazek
John Dart

Foundation Board

Paul Boyd
Jim Braun
Joe Medakovich
Roger Webster

Deacons

Jane Noden
Marsha Holbert
Rick Holbert
Cindy Reilly
Anne Webster

Snow days are here!!

When the Bellevue Public School system closes for bad weather the church office will also be closed and any event scheduled that day will be cancelled.



Thank you to the Fellowship Committee and all who helped make 2017 a successful year. A special thank you to Nancy Worm for making the awesome chicken casserole for the Presbyterian Luncheon in May. We look forward to our activities in 2018

Dawn E. Matthews, Lead Elder for Fellowship Committee.

PER CAPITA – PER PERSON

Per capita is a Latin term that translates into "by head," basically meaning "average per person."

Per capita is important to being Presbyterian! It is the way Presbyterians mutually share governance expenses to make mission and programs possible. It is how Presbyterians discern God's call in their lives. It is how Presbyterians participate in the life of the wider church by serving on General Assembly committees and commissions. It is how Presbyterians participate in the life of the Church universal as we commit ourselves to work and live in fellowship with "all persons in every nation."

The required total per capita amount due from each congregation is a combined request from the Presbytery of Missouri River Valley, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, and the General Assembly - of which each congregation is a part. We owe \$38.33 for each person (Per Capita) on the active rolls of our church. In 2018, the apportionment due for our church will be \$11,537.33.

There will be a special blue per capita envelope on the name tag table. Please use that envelope to pay your Per Capita and write your envelope # on your check, If you do not have the envelope please write Per Capita in the memo portion of your check. To go above and beyond what you do for your own per capita, please consider adding an additional amount for our confirmands or shut-ins.

Our church must pay our total per capita amount by February 15, 2018.

Thank you, Stewardship Committee



Happenings

De-Greening of the Church-On Sunday, January 7th, immediately following the Worship Service we pack up the Christmas decorations for another year in preparation for all that 2018 has to offer!

Free Family Movie Night- Sunday, January 7th. That night, at 5:00 PM, we will host a free Family Movie Night, with a light supper at 5:00 PM, followed by the movie “Moana” and then arts and crafts for



those who are interested. It’s fun for all ages to gather in Fellowship Hall and eat and watch the movie together and I hope you will consider joining us!

Join us for Ladies’ Lunch- We are meeting on the **Fourth Thursday** of each month at noon. January we are going to meet at “The Special” on January 25th. Make your reservation by calling the church office at 402-291-1104 or e-mailing admin@bellevuefpc.org.



The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, January 28th, immediately following the Worship Service. Lunch will be served by the youth and a free-will offering will support the youth’s mission trips in 2018. The 2017 annual report, 2018 budget will be reviewed, and the Pastor’s Terms of Call will be approved. There will be activities for the children during the meeting. Join us and find out what’s happening at First Presbyterian Church.

Pancake Feed-February 4th is not only Scout Sunday, it’s also the day of the Troop 467 Pancake Feed. The troop, which meets here at the church on Thursday night, invites you to join them following the worship service for pancakes and sausage for \$5 per person, \$10 per family.



Come Fellowship in 2018!

As you get out your planner for 2018, you’ll want to pencil in these great events the Fellowship committee has planned for 2018:

Love Dinner ~ February 10
Spaghetti Dinner ~ April 7
Garage Sale ~ April 28

There will be more information for each event in the newsletter as the time draws near, however, be sure to save these dates now!



2018 Stewardship Campaign Updated Results as of December 18, 2017

We have now received 91 pledges totaling \$258,013. This excellent result is already \$8,000 more than the \$250,283 pledged for 2017, but still slightly short of our \$262,500 goal.

To those of you who have already turned in your 2018 pledge, we sincerely thank you. If you wish to pre-pay any part of your 2018 pledge---be sure to turn in your contribution NLT December 31, 2017.

If you haven't turned in your 2018 pledge---it's NOT too late. Please prayerfully consider doing so using the white pledge card. Additional cards are available on the Name Tag table located in the Narthex/Library.

For any questions regarding the 2018 Stewardship Campaign please contact me or our Financial Secretary, Eric Van Sky.

Bob Jeffus
Chair, Stewardship Committee

DEBT PAY-OFF CAMPAIGN UPDATE As of December 18, 2017

First Presbyterian Church's outstanding building loan balance now stands at \$256,717. In July 2013, our outstanding debt stood at \$750,000. The monthly loan payment is \$6,715.

So far, the October 2016 Debt Pay-Off Campaign has received 36 pledges totaling \$87,852. Contributions to date are over \$103,051 which reflects \$61,720 in pledged contributions and \$41,331 in non-pledged contributions. Many FPC members are contributing but had elected not to pledge.

The DEBT PAY-OFF FUND currently contains \$35,910. With continuing known contributions of \$3,500 to \$4,000 per month, we will be able to make loan payments for all of 2018 without impacting the 2018 Operating Budget---but not much beyond. If you have not pledged, or you are not contributing to the Debt Pay-Off Campaign, we prayerfully ask you to do so. Wouldn't it be marvelous if we could have the loan fully paid off early in 2019? Including last year's loan REFI this would save the church about \$30,000 in interest expense, plus free up money every year for future growth and mission work. Please use the RED pledge card located on the name tag table. Please continue to use the PINK envelopes for your contributions.

Thank you again for your generosity. As a church family we are truly Blessed. If you have any questions, please contact me or Eric Van Sky (Financial Secretary).

Bob Jeffus
(402) 733-2642
Chair, Stewardship Committee



Bellevue Together-What an amazing distribution of gifts, food baskets, gift wrapping and kid activity stations. Thank you to the Bellevue Together community who gave so generously with gifts, food, winter gear and financially. A big shout out to our wonderful volunteers who worked so tirelessly to prepare the event and make it so special for the people we served.



We are blessed with amazing school Counselors and Social Workers who refer families. Around 350 children received gifts and 85 families received amazing food baskets, hats, gloves and socks. **Our church family donated 43 gifts, 13 turkeys, 26 food boxes and \$295. Our Mission Committee donated \$640 to buy whatever was needed.** At the event they were served hot cocoa and sweet treats along with a Village Inn pie to take home.

What an honor to live, work and give back to our Bellevue Community through First Presbyterian Church and Bellevue Together.



Welcome School

The kids were full of the holiday spirit in December! They were busy wrapping presents, making gifts for their parents, acting out the Christmas Story and using lots and lots of glitter!

The children really enjoy having guest readers. If you are interested in reading a story to the children, please let me know. You can bring your own book or use one of ours. We are always looking for substitute teacher's aides. There is only one qualification; you have to love children.

Welcome School's winter break is from Thursday, December 21st – Monday, December 8th. School resumes on Tuesday, January 9th.

Have a wonderful holiday season!

God Bless,
Tara Williams
Welcome School Director



Children's Ministry



Linda Reffert

Wasn't Christmas Eve wonderful! I'm actually writing this before Christmas Eve but I trust that it was. I trust that all 3 services were glorious and a delightful celebration of our precious Savior. And I sure hope your personal Christmas Eve and Christmas were wonderful too.

I want to thank all the participants in the 10:30 AM Worship service on Christmas Eve. Musicians were: Mandi Crick; Isabel, Emerson & Jackson Griffin; Christopher and Jack Reilly; Makayla & Katie Crick; Josh Blazek, Eoin Healy; Ash Hudson; Emily deZafra and Scott Reffert. Our Poetry reader was Abby Reilly. Scripture readers were: Heather & Fianna Glenn; Paul & Margot Boyd; Aoife Healy & Susan Tamayo; Marty, Rebecca, Isabel, Emerson & Jackson Griffin and Deb & Ash Hudson. Nora Boyd read a delightful children's story called *Little Star*. The Advent Family and Greeters were the Warren Family – Patrick, Megan, Nicollette, Elijah and Quentin. Ushers were: Roger Webster, Jack Syphers and Marty & Jackson Griffin. A/V technicians were Ryan Crick and Rick Kirmis. I also want to thank Pastor Mike for leading worship with me and for being so supportive of this service.

2018 Children's activities start up on Sunday, January 7th with Sunday School at 9 AM and Family Movie Night that evening at 5 PM. We're going to share a FREE kid friendly dinner and then watch the Disney movie *Moana* and those who are interested can do related crafts after the movie. Heads up if you are thinking about joining us – we are going to turn the temperature up in Fellowship Hall and pretend it's warm and we're in Polynesia. If you need to dress warm for our real weather, you might want to dress in layers so you can be comfy in a warm room too! Movie watchers can bring pillows and blankets and get comfy on the floor or sit in chairs, as they prefer.

Our first WOW of 2018 will be on January 10th. This would be a great time for a new student to start and registration forms and schedules are available in my

office any time. Children do not need to be from families who are active in our congregation. Friends are always welcome! Dinner is just \$2 for guests and new registrants for the semester can pay a semester charge of \$25. I am looking for a few Kitchen helpers to help Mike Tabler prepare and serve Wednesday night dinners. You need to plan to report in at 4:30 for a 5:30 serving time. A free dinner is included with the duties. If you can help us during 2nd semester, whether it's a one time thing or once a month, please let me know ASAP.

I'm also looking for an adult to shepherd the kids to Music and to Faith Education once or twice a month. Duties run from 6 to 7 PM and require no preparation, just patience and a positive attitude. Please let me know if you have questions or want to volunteer.



Youth Fellowship (YF) News

1Corinthians 12:4 “Now there are a varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit”

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and are ready for a New Year of new opportunities and new adventures. What will you do with your gifts? Are there some you don't know how you're going to use so they will just sit on the shelf until you figure it out one day? It's like your God given talents and gifts. One year John's co-worker gave his wife a snowblower. He couldn't figure out why she was mad at him. It is a useful and good gift but not what she wanted, although she did appreciate it later when he was traveling for work and we got a ton of snow. Our talents can sometimes be like that, not what we want or think is cool but so helpful and useful. Sometimes it takes a while to appreciate and figure out how to use them but I hope you will make it your goal to spend some quite time with God and figure it out.

It was a busy month with the Open Door Mission the first Sunday of December. Many thanks to Pastor Mike, the Tablers and Jim Braun for taking the kiddos to work at the Mission so I could go to Bethany's Christmas program with Mom. There were some changes from the last time we were there so I really appreciate their flexibility and patience while demonstrating a great work ethic for the youth. It is a work in progress and I'm so please to have great turnout again for a evening of serving others.

Thank you to everyone who donated and purchased Silent Auction items and to those who helped prepare and ate at the luncheon. This is our largest fundraiser of the year, earning over \$2,000 which will help us for our mission trips and support other mission projects for the Youth. We had great team work and the donation tables looked so beautiful but it was such a crazy day I didn't take even one picture. If anyone happened to take one, I would love a copy.

One other new Mission Outreach for the youth was sending care packages to college students during finals week and to deployed friends. I received 7 addresses and packed up the cookies Becky Berg helped us make with some other fun things. I think it's important for the church family to reach out to those near and far and let them know we are thinking

of them. It was also a lot of fun watching the kids baking 18 dozen cookies, not for themselves although we did do a bit of quality control, but to give to others to brighten their day.

The Round-Town day of mission and lock-in is 9:00 am Friday January 5. We will be doing various mission projects in the Bellevue/Omaha area ending with dinner and a lock-in at Church of the Master. This is always a fun day of fellowship and work followed by a night of games, movies and a nerf battle has been known to break out. Make sure you talk to me if you are going so we have enough drivers.

January 7 is Family Movie night at 5:00pm. We will be watching Moana , eating dinner and doing crafts. Bring a friend, come in your jammies, bring a blanket and enjoy a fun night.

January 14 is Youth Fellowship Game night from 3 - 5. Bring a snack to share and come for fun and games. Friends are welcome, the more the merrier.

We will start working on Youth Sunday this month so get those creative and inspiring brain cells going!

Wishing you a Happy New Year and Blessings to you and your families.

Shelli



January Youth Events

January	1	Happy New Year!
January	5	Round Town Day of Mission and Lock-in 9:00am
January	7	Family Movie Night 5:00pm - Moana
January	10	Illuminate and Confirmation Resume
January	14	Youth Fellowship Game Night



~ January 2018 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 New Year's Day Church Office Closed	2 Church Office Closed 6p Mission Mtg (VVR) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	3 7p Choir Rehearsal	4 7p Troop 467	5 9a Youth Roundtown Mission & Lock In	6 Epiphany
7 Pantry Sunday 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service 11:30a Deacons Mtg (VVR) 11:30a Degreening 5p Family Movie Night 7p Venture Crew 26	8 7p Women's Bible Study (CR)	9 10:30a Staff Meeting (CR) 5:30p Christian Education Mtg (L) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	10 8:45a PEO (VVR/FH) 5:30p Confirmation Class (CR) 5:30p W.O.W./Illuminate 6p Finance Mtg (Admin Ofc) 7p Choir Rehearsal	11 6p Building & Grounds Mtg (CR) 6:30p Membership (VVR) 7p PW Bible Study (Kieran home) 7p Troop 467 7p Worship Mtg (CR)	12	13 10a Women's Book Club (VVR)
14 Ordination Sunday Undie Sunday 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service 11:30a Foundation Meeting (CR)	15 Martin Luther King 7p Venture Crew 26 7p Women's Bible Study (CR)	16 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	17 5:30p Confirmation Class (CR) 5:30p W.O.W./Illuminate 7p Choir Rehearsal	18 7p Troop 467	19	20
21 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service 11:30a Fellowship Mtg (VVR)	22 7p Women's Bible Study (CR)	23 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	24 5:30p W.O.W./Illuminate 7p Choir Rehearsal	25 12p Ladies Lunch (The Special) 7p Session (VVR) 7p Troop 467	26	27
28 Next Sunday Pantry Sunday 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service 11:30a Annual Meeting	29 7p Women's Bible Study (CR)	30 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	31 5:30p W.O.W./Illuminate 7p Choir Rehearsal	Notes:		



First Presbyterian Church
1220 Bellevue Blvd. South
Bellevue, NE 68005
Phone: 402-291-1104



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January Birthdays:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Mel Hess | 19 Emily Fettes |
| 2 Cassi Norton | 20 Judy Medakovich |
| 3 Dianna Martin | 20 Curt Hart |
| 6 Sara Oxtoby | 21 Shelli Dart |
| 7 Mariah Kilpatrick | 21 Beth Sanborn |
| 8 Gene Farley | 22 Norm Grenon |
| 8 Tim Lehr | 23 Elijah Fenster |
| 8 Elizabeth Van Sky | 24 Jack Syphers |
| 10 Lisa Beasley | 25 Tom MacKinnon |
| 12 Liane Kirmis | 25 Nancy St. Clair |
| 13 Katie Crick | 25 Lou Worm |
| 13 Bill Zipse | 26 Grace Wilson |
| 14 Libby Grenon | 29 Kim Grenon |
| 16 Zachary Keaton | 29 Lloyd Johnson |
| 17 George Thompson | 31 Jim Davis |

