

Hilltop Highlights

A Monthly Publication of First Presbyterian Church

“Ready, Set, Go”

“Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path.” Psalm 119:105

I have always had a problem with New Year’s because it comes at a time when nothing feels new. The Christmas decorations look ragged and worn out now that January 1 has come and gone. Taking them down is a chore but looking at them any longer is a torture. Winter hasn’t even gotten out of the gate at Christmastime. By New Year’s Day, winter’s iciest, coldest two and a half months are still ahead of us, with precious few holidays to break up the tedium. That sure sounds like nothing new to me. Just business as usual. Now May would be a perfectly good month for New Year’s. “Spring has sprung, the grass has riz” and everything is clean and fresh! There are weddings and graduations and other happy times taking place. Yes, May would make a mighty fine time for New Year’s. January 1, just “same old, same old!”

The truth about life is that in every season of life, there is a new thing that God is doing, if we will open our hearts and spirits to it. Whatever time it is in your life, whatever your age or occupation, God still calls out to each one of us to come and open our spirits to God’s Word. To seek and find that light for our path and lamp for our feet. To open ourselves to God’s Word again. This truly deep midwinter season, this season of sameness and tedium, is a perfect time to do something new. And you can do it from the warmth and safety of your living room too, like I plan on doing. For you 115 dedicated folk out there, men and women, young and old, you have accepted the challenge to do something new. Big and bold and new. To set 2019 aside as the year that we, together, read through the Bible. It is my joy and privilege to be taking this journey with you.

I have to warn you that it will not be an easy road to walk. There will be so many times you will be tempted to skip your daily reading and after missing a few days, the backlog will seem insurmountable. But we have a lamp and a light for us. We will have the very Scripture that we are reading to inspire us and keep us on track.

January 1 for us at FPC is not going to be just more of the same. We will be charting a new course for our lives as we allow Scripture, all of Scripture, to speak to our lives.



If you have not yet signed on for this exciting journey, it is not too late. Just give me a call or grab me after church and I can get you oriented. I still have a few books left in my office.

SO, how is your New Year looking? Cold and white and boring? Or will it be new and different and exciting?

In Christ’s Peace,
Pastor Mike



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Staff

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M, Tu, W, Th 8:30 am to 3:00 pm

June Kouba (Church Administrator/Treasurer)-admin@bellevuefpc.org
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Linda Reffert (Children's Ministry Director)-lkreffert@aol.com
Tu, W, Th 9:00 am to 5:00 pm (hours may vary)

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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 of thanksgiving for Gary Marks new kidney.
- ◆ Prayers for Jeanette McLaughlin who is receiving cancer treatment.
- ◆ Prayers for Becky Baruth and her family as she is being treated for cancer.
- ◆ Prayers for Carl Seaman receiving cancer treatment.

Bakersplus.com

We just received the **Third quarter** of 2018 rebate from Bakers for **\$255.83**, this is wonderful but only includes **44** households. So if you have not registered **First Presbyterian Church #HY977** under your Baker's Plus card Community partner tab, please do so. This does not affect any other rewards you receive from Baker's.

Financial Information

| | | <u>November</u> | <u>YTD</u> |
|------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Income | \$20,259.97 | \$286,467.06 | |
| Expenses | <u>\$25,327.58</u> | <u>\$300,655.37</u> | |
| Difference | <\$5,067.61 | <\$14,188.31 | |



Happenings

New Officers for 2019

Elders

John Dart
Laura Miller
JoAnne Nielsen
Steve Renner
Sue Tabler

Foundation Board

Don Glenn
Don Fenster
Tom Miller

Deacons

Retha Dowding
Jane Hink
Mary Lehr
Wendy Renter
Melissa Young

De-Greening of the Church-On Sunday, January 6th, immediately following the Worship Service we pack up the Christmas decorations for another year in preparation for all that 2019 has to offer!

Free Family Movie Night- Sunday, January 6th. 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 "Ferdinand" 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!

Dirk Lindner will be presenting a program of **Swedish music for the piano**, on January 13, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. at Sinai Lutheran Church, 950 E. 8th St., Fremont, NE. This program of Swedish music includes variations on Swedish folk songs, Swedish hymn tune pieces, and music in the style of Swedish folk and dance music, and includes music in the Baroque, Romantic and contemporary styles. There is no charge for admission.



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 24th. 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 27th, 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 2019. The 2018 annual report, 2019 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.



Happenings

Butter Braids are back!

Welcome School will be selling Butter Braids starting on Sunday, February 3rd. The first two Sundays in February the 3rd and 10th, Tara Williams the Director of Welcome School will be giving out samples during Coffee Fellowship. Order forms will be available each Sunday. Butter Braids are available in 7 flavors and for only \$12.00 each. Please place your order on the order form and pay when ordered. Delivery will be Sunday, March 3rd.



Pancake Feed-February 3rd 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.



Get your chili recipe ready. February 9th at 5:30pm we'll have a chili cook-off (instead of the Love Dinner). All ages are invited. Come join in the fun and enjoy what I am sure will be some great tasting chili recipes.



Thank You

"To all my Christian friends at "First Presbyterian Church", I want to extend my heart felt "THANK YOU" (no pun intended). I was going to send each of you a personal card, however I quickly realized I couldn't write that many. So here it is in the church's monthly newsletter. Your cards of Prayer, Laughter and Encouragement got me through some tough times, recovering from open heart surgery. I've started Cardiac Rehab and look forward to seeing you all soon. My prayers for all of you and again Thank You. " **Lloyd J. Dowding**

Thank you for your cards, thoughts and prayers during my recovery from my fall. I am improving everyday and appreciate your thoughtfulness. **Grace Wilson**

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. If church is cancelled we will post the announcement on KETV and WOWT .



PER CAPITA – PER PERSON

What is per capita? Per capita is important to being a Presbyterian! It is the way Presbyterians mutually share governance expenses to make mission and programs possible. 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. We will owe **\$39.55** for each active member. In 2019, our apportionment will be **\$10,797.15**. If we don't reach that amount from the per capita request, funds will be taken from somewhere else in our budget to ensure First Presbyterian meets the required per capita assessment.

Next Steps

Take a special per capita envelope from the name tag table. Include a check for **\$39.55** for each church member in your family. Write your envelope # on your check. If you do not have the envelope, please write Per Capita in the memo portion of your check. Leave the envelope or check in the offering plate or the office by February 3rd.

Our church must pay our total per capita amount by February 15, 2019.

Thank you, Stewardship Committee

2019 STEWARDSHIP & RETIRE THE DEBT CAMPAIGN

Update Results
As of December 17, 2018

Sunday, September 30, 2018, was Stewardship Commitment Sunday. 89 pledges have now been turned in totaling \$256,500. Our goal for 2019 is \$265,000 which is only about 1% higher than the amount pledged for this year.

To those of you who have already turned in your 2019 pledge, we thank you for your response and generosity. If you have not pledged, please contribute as generously as possible to the 2019 Operating Budget.

Updated results for the "Retire The Debt in 2019" Campaign are 34 pledges totaling \$50,055. This is a good start to reaching our goal of FPC becoming totally debt free by the end of next year, or at the least, being able to sustain our monthly payments next year without negatively impacting our 2019 Operating Budget. If you haven't turned in your 2019 pledge cards, please do so as soon as possible. Additional 2019 Stewardship Campaign and Retire The Debt in 2019 pledge cards are available on the name tag table. For those of you who haven't pledged but are regularly contributing to one or both campaigns, we sincerely thank you.

For any questions regarding the 2019 Stewardship or Retire The Debt Campaigns please contact me or our Financial Secretary Eric van Sky.

Bob Jeffus
Chair, Stewardship Committee



Two ways to donate to the church and save Income Taxes

If you are over 59 ½ you can make a direct transfer from your **Traditional IRA** or other retirement account. Your finance institution can send a check directly to First Presbyterian Church and you will incur **no income taxes** on the transfer and it **will** count as part of your **Required Minimum Distribution**.

Give appreciated stock or mutual funds to First Presbyterian Church by completing some forms to **transfer the stock** from your **brokerage account** to the church's brokerage account (Foundation Fund). You will have **no tax liability** on the capital gains and neither will the church.

Example:

- ◆ You bought 100 shares @ \$10 which = \$1,000
- ◆ Market value on 12/15/18 is \$20 which = \$2,000
- ◆ You then have a \$1,000 capital gain
- ◆ You can now donate the \$1,000 original value and the \$1,000 capital gain to the church by transferring the funds to the church's brokerage account and eliminating the tax liability on the \$1,000 capital gain, since you never sell the stock and the funds go directly from the brokerage to the church.

If you would like more information please contact Carolyn Hess at candmhess@cox.net or Eric VanSky at eric.vansky@yahoo.com

News from 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.

Welcome School's winter break is from Thursday, December 20th through Monday, January 7th. School resumes on Tuesday, January 8th.

Have a wonderful holiday season!

God Bless,

Tara Williams, Welcome School Director



Children's Ministry



Linda Reffert

Whewww, it's hard for me to imagine it right now, but when this newsletter goes out to all of you, Christmas will be over and the new year will be upon us. In the past, I have tried to write as if Christmas Eve services happened, and I knew how they went. But the truth is, we live in Nebraska

and as I write this, I can't say for certain Christmas Eve wasn't snowed out, much less how the services went. I can say for certain though, that I hope you and yours had a lovely Christmas and that you felt the love and the wonder of Jesus's birth in a deep and profound way. And I'm wishing you a wonderful 2019!

I want to thank Rob Rose and the children of the church for an excellent Christmas program! Rob and the kids worked very hard and it showed. I also need to thank the musicians for that program – Andrew Baruth, Ryan & Rob Crick and Brian Wells. They worked hard too! Everyone rehearsed for a whole morning the day before the program, in addition to all the Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings practices. There was downtime throughout that Saturday morning for different groupings of kids and I was so grateful to Becca Griffin, Cindy Reilly, Beth Urwin, Nora Boyd and Megan Warren for costuming the kids, giving them healthy snacks and keeping them busy with fun activities. I also want to thank Deacons Cindy Reilly, Becky Berg, Carole Warnes and Kathy White for providing the treats for our Happy Birthday Jesus party that followed the program. Becca Griffin and Nora Boyd helped with the party and keeping things calm and focused.

I am so proud of all the children and youth who volunteered their time and talents for our 5 PM Christmas Eve worship. I haven't had to remind anyone that it's not about performing, it's about offering our best in celebration of the birth of our

Lord. These gifts given out of love are just so moving, I keep tearing up when I hear them practicing.

Sunday School will start back up on January 6th at 9 AM. WOW will begin 2nd semester on Wednesday, January 9th at 5:30 PM. I am short of WOW cooking staff through the months of January and February because of our snowbirds, so if you can help Mike Tabler during those months, please let me know ASAP!

Our first Family Movie Night of 2019 will be held at 5 PM on Sunday, January 6th. As always, it's a FREE evening and you can bring as many guests as you'd like! We'll share a kid-friendly dinner and watch the movie Ferdinand, followed by crafts for those who are interested. Welcome School families have been invited, and if you come that night, I hope you will help me reach out to them to make them feel more comfortable and welcome.



Youth Fellowship (YF) News



"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface

of the waters."
Genesis 1:1-2

I am so excited that our church family is reading the Bible in a year that I had to kick off with the above

scripture. In the beginning - it's the beginning of a new year and I am so proud of the youth for joining in on the challenge. We spent a Wednesday night creating journals that they can use while reading to write down questions or verses to remember. I have found that very helpful each time I read through the Bible. Each time you read the Bible there is always something that hits you in a new way and speaks to the events going on in your life. I look forward to learning more and doing this with all of you!

Many thanks to all the helpers and supporters of the youth auction and luncheon. We earned \$3,427 and had so many great themed baskets and a special collectable that made this a record year. This summer we will be taking 14 people to Triennium and I try to keep the cost down for the attendees so we had actually used all our Mission trip funds to pay for the trip. Your generosity refills our account and makes a difference in what I can do with the youth. Thank you all so very much!

January is the month for resolutions and new plans and do-overs. It's also the month that the youth write a letter to themselves. I used to give them the letters back at the end of the year but now I keep a file for each one and give them the file when they graduate. Many have really enjoyed reading their letters and

remembering what they did that year and their hopes and dreams for their future. I think it would be great for all of us to do that. Our own personal time capsule and read it the next year, maybe write your note on January 1 and put it at the end of Revelation so when you finish the Bible you get an extra reward, a letter to yourself!



It's fun to have the Holiday off but I do miss time with the kiddos and will be happy to get back to our regular schedule. The youth of this church are our

future so our future will be full of creativity, questions, learning, teaching, enthusiasm, helping others and a bit of fun and mischief. Sounds like a fun future to me.

Wishing you all a Blessed and Happy New Year!
Be a Blessing. Shelli



January Youth Events

- Jan 6** Sunday School resumes
Family Movie Night 5:00
- Jan 9** Illuminate and Confirmation resume
- Jan 13** Triennium Mixer 2:00 Church of the Cross
- Jan 27** Potato Bar Luncheon fundraiser



~ January 2019 ~

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|--|---|--|----------------------|-----|
| <p>6 Epiphany Pantry Sunday 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service 11:30a Deacons Mtg (VVR) 5p Family Movie Night 7p Venture Crew 26</p> | | <p>1 New Year's Day Church Office is Closed</p> | | | | |
| | | <p>8 10:30a Staff Meeting (CR) 5:30p Christian Education Mtg (L) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>9 9a P.E.O. (VVR) 5:30p WOW/Illuminate 6p Confirmation Class (VVR) 6p Finance Mtg (Admin Ofc) 7p Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>10 6p Building & Grounds Mtg (CR) 6:30p Membership (VVR) 7p PW Bible Study (Kieran home) 7p Troop 467 7p Worship Mtg (CR)</p> | | |
| <p>13 Undie Sunday 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service 11:30a Mission Meeting (VVR)</p> | | <p>15 1p Welcome School Meeting (CR) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>16 5:30p WOW/Illuminate 6p Confirmation Class (VVR) 7p Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>17 7p Troop 467</p> | | |
| <p>20 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service 11:30a Fellowship Mtg (VVR)</p> | <p>21 Martin Luther King Church Office is Closed 7p Venture Crew 26</p> | <p>22</p> | <p>23 5:30p WOW/Illuminate 6p Confirmation Class (VVR) 7p Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>24 12p Ladies Lunch (The Special) 7p Session (VVR) 7p Troop 467</p> | | |
| <p>27 Next Sunday Pantry Sunday 9a Sunday School 10:30a Installation of Officers 10:30a Worship Service 11:30a Congregational Annual Meeting</p> | <p>28 1p Women's Bible Study (CR)</p> | <p>29 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>30 5:30p WOW/Illuminate 6p Last Confirmation Class (VVR) 7p Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>31 7p Troop 467</p> | <p>Notes:</p> | |



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Mailing Address Line 5

January Birthdays:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Mel Hess | 20 Judy Medakovich |
| 2 Cassi Norton | 20 Curt Hart |
| 3 Dianna Martin | 21 Shelli Dart |
| 6 Sara Oxtoby | 21 Beth Sanborn |
| 7 Mariah Kilpatrick | 22 Norm Grenon |
| 8 Gene Farley | 23 Elijah Fenster |
| 8 Tim Lehr | 24 Jack Syphers |
| 8 Elizabeth Van Sky | 25 Tom MacKinnon |
| 10 Lisa Beasley | 25 Nancy St. Clair |
| 12 Liane Kirmis | 25 Lou Worm |
| 13 Katie Crick | 26 Grace Wilson |
| 13 Bill Zipse | 29 Kim Grenon |
| 14 Libby Grenon | 30 Lloyd Johnson |
| 16 Zachary Keaton | 31 Jim Davis |
| 17 George Thompson | |

