

Hilltop Highlights

A Monthly Publication of First Presbyterian Church

Lent: A Season of Mercy

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matthew 9:10-13)

In just a few short days, another season of Lent will be beginning. Setting aside the forty days leading up to Easter Sunday as a special time has been a church tradition since as early as 325 AD. Lent is a special time of prayer, penance, sacrifice and good works in preparation of the celebration of Easter. Depending on the denomination, more or less emphasis is placed on things like fasting and sacrifice, but there is no doubt that a major emphasis of Lent has been on self-denial. I can still remember as a kid, hearing the priest remind us in church that if Jesus could suffer for us on the cross, we could certainly suffer without chocolate or sweets or some such thing for only a mere forty days!!! While I can understand his sentiment, I'm not sure that such a mindset is very helpful for most of us. Maybe there are others ways that we can keep Lent that are more meaningful to us.

This Lent we will again be doing our five week Lenten Supper and Bible Study beginning on Thursday, March 13th at 6PM and running until Thursday, April 11th. Dinner will be provided each night by various groups within the church and a free-will offering will be taken to help defray the cost of the meal.

Linda Reffert and I will be providing the program. It will follow a similar format to last year where we start with some music, spend some time together sharing Scripture and then work together in small groups as we listen for how God is speaking to us through those passages.

As Linda and I were looking at the Old Testament and Gospel readings for the Sunday's in Lent for this year, one common theme seems to run deeply through both the Old and the New Testament passages for each week. But they provide very different viewpoints on that theme. For example on March 28 we will be talking about mercy. While not necessarily a typical word we associate with Lent, the Scriptures invite us to share how God shows mercy to us, how we can show mercy to the people in our life and even to how we can show mercy to ourselves. Other themes we will be sharing with each other are: wilderness, generosity, shame and covenant.



We hope you can join us. This will be a time of good food, good fellowship, good discussion and good fun as we share together in the Word and the season. It is also a great way to try out your newly acquired "Through the Bible in a Year" skills! Sign-up sheets will be available in the Library. This is an excellent time to invite your friends or neighbors to join us as well.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Mike



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We Keep in Our Prayers

- ◆ Prayers for Gary Marks as he recovers from receiving his 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 **Fourth Quarter** of 2018 rebate from Bakers for **\$250.16**, this is wonderful but only includes **46** 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>January</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Income	\$66,477.09	\$66,477.09
Expenses	\$42,804.98	\$42,804.98
Difference	\$23,672.11	\$23,672.11



Happenings

Join us for "Lady and the Tramp"

What: FREE Movie, Kid-Friendly Dinner & Crafts

We'll get acquainted, eat dinner, and watch the movie . A variety of craft projects will be available after the movie.

When: Sunday, March 3rd at 5 pm

Where: Fellowship Hall, First Presbyterian Church Bring your own pillow and/or blanket to be comfy on the floor.

Who: First Presbyterian Church & Welcome School families. Friends, relatives and neighbors too!

Questions? Call Linda Reffert in the Children's Ministry Office at 402-291-1104 or email at lkreffert@aol.com



Ash Wednesday– For many years now, Avery Presbyterian and First Presbyterian have shared a meal and worship service on Ash Wednesday. This year's event will be held at Avery on Wednesday, March 6th. Dinner will begin at 5:45pm. Our congregation is asked to provide the bread and dessert. A short worship service follows at 6:45pm.

Church Family Game Night

Friday, March 8th. 6:00pm

Games are for everyone! Here is a good way to beat the winter doldrums. Join your church family for a fun evening of fellowship starting with a light dinner at 6:00pm followed by a variety of board & card games for adults & youth in Fellowship Hall. Age appropriate games for kids will be located downstairs. A free-will offering will be accepted to help cover pizza costs. Please sign up in the library or call the church office to let us know you are coming so we can prepare for dinner.



Lent, A Season of Mercy

Lenten Suppers- Dinner will be offered each Thursday night during Lent through April 11th. Each week, a ministry of the church provides the meal which starts at 6:00pm in Fellowship Hall and will go until 7:30pm. The entire meal will be provided and a freewill offering will be accepted to cover the cost of the meal. A small group Bible study will follow the dinner.

Instead of giving up something for Lent this year, why not add something? Join us for a time of fellowship and reflection as we embark on this period of repentance and preparation for Christ's passion.



Spaghetti Dinner

Our Annual Spaghetti Dinner will be held Saturday, March 16th,
from 4:30pm– 7:30pm here at First Presbyterian Church.

Tickets are \$10.00 per person. There is no charge for children 5 and under. The menu includes all you can eat salad, spaghetti and meat or meatless sauce, bread, beverage and pie. "TAKEOUT" will be available.

Silent Auction and Raffle Items

If you would like to donate to the Raffle or Silent Auction please have your items at the church no later than Thursday, March 7th. Please indicate an approximate value and your name, phone number and address.

One thing that we will do different this year is that we will be setting up the silent auction the Saturday before the Spaghetti Dinner, this way the congregation has an opportunity to see and bid on the items or purchase raffle tickets.

This event is a cooperative effort and all proceeds will be divided equally between Bellevue Public Schools TeamMates and First Presbyterian Church missions.

We hope you will participate in this fun evening and all-church fundraising effort!

How can you help?

- ☺ Buy tickets and sell tickets. (All volunteers will need a ticket)
- ☺ Bring your family, invite prospective members, friends, co-workers and neighbors.
- ☺ Sign-up at church to work a 2 – 2 ½ hour shift at the event.
- ☺ Please donate Raffle or Silent Auction items (bring them to church by Thursday, March 7th).
- ☺ Unable to attend? Donate the price of a couple of tickets or more to help us defray expenses.

Tickets may be purchased in the church office between 8:30 am - 3:00 pm Monday through Thursday, or in the narthex on Sundays before or after church through March 9th.

If you are selling tickets please turn in your money and unsold tickets as soon as possible no later than March 9th.

Please join us in working together to make this fundraiser a huge success?

THANKS IN ADVANCE for your help in making a difference in our community!



Easter Lilies-Once again this year you have the opportunity to purchase an Easter Lily in memory or honor of your loved ones. The flowers will beautify our sanctuary on Easter morning and may be taken home after the 10:30 am service that day. They are \$10.00 each and can be ordered from the Worship Committee on Sunday mornings March 11th, 18th and 25th

Join us for **Ladies' Lunch**. We are meeting on the **Fourth Thursday** of each month at noon. March we are going to meet at Papa Reno's on March 28th. Make your reservation by calling the church office at 402-291-1104 or e-mailing admin@bellevuefpc.org.





Crossroads Connection ministers to current inmates at Omaha Work Release Center and provides social services to former inmates who are transitioning to outside life. They conduct a weekly Sunday evening worship service attended by inmates, former inmates, sponsors and volunteers. Providing the meal and worship service is an outreach that our congregation has participated in for many years. Our next event is on Sunday, April 14th. This is an excellent outreach to volunteer for because you decide what level of participation interests you.

- We need salads and desserts for the meal. These can be prepared ahead of time and delivered to the church on the day of the event.
- We also need help preparing the meal. The time commitment varies based upon the meal.
- You can also go with us to serve the meal. We meet here at the church at 5:00 pm and carpool to the location of the dinner. We usually return by 9:00 pm.

Thank you for your support of this ministry over the years and in the future!

Open Doors, Open Hearts

All around the world we see people whose homes and even loved ones have been washed away by hurricanes and floods, people trapped in systems of injustice and oppression, and people who will go to bed tonight hungry or without a roof over their heads.

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) lets us come together to open our door, as well as our heart. To share the love of Christ through our ministries of justice, compassion, and joy.

OGHS is the single, largest way that Presbyterians join together to share God’s love with our neighbors-in-need around the world. Each gift helps to improve the lives of people in challenging situations.

We will be collecting for One Great Hour beginning April 14th through Easter Sunday, April 21st.



There were a total of 20 pots of chili, 17 to be judged, and 80 people who attended this years Chili Cook Off. A lot of fun was had by all.

The winners were: Hottest (**Brian Renter**)
Original (**Cathy Talmadge**)
Alternate Class (**Cathy Talmadge**)

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 service is cancelled on Sunday we will post the announcement on KETV and WOWT .



Sunday, March 10th



DEBT PAY-OFF CAMPAIGN UPDATE

As of February 10, 2019

First Presbyterian Church's outstanding building loan balance is now down to \$177,150. In July 2013, the balance stood at \$750,000. The monthly loan payment is \$6,372.98. Through regular monthly payments, the loan will not be paid off until the Summer of 2021.

The DEBT PAY-OFF FUND currently contains \$35,002. With continuing pledged and non-pledged, contributions we should be able to make loan payments for all of 2019 and perhaps the first couple of months of 2020 without negatively impacting the Operating Budget.

FIRST PRES NEEDS YOUR HELP. 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 by early 2020? 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
Chair, Stewardship Committee

News from Welcome School

There's no such thing as the Winter Blues at Welcome School! Our mornings have been filled with winter wonders no matter the weather. The children have enjoyed our Pirate, Veterinarian Office, and Space centers these last few weeks. There were many fun activities in each class. All of the classes had "Hearts of Kindness". The children write down some nice things they've done for others onto a heart. They share them with the class and it is displayed on the wall.



All of the classes enjoyed their annual Hot Chocolate Parties, which was a true success if the children were wearing a bit of hot chocolate on their noses for the day. The children had a grand time climbing high up in the sky on our wonderful "fear-conquering" climber. The children also played in the water with some fun Valentine objects.

Our Butterbraid fundraiser was a success! Thank you all who purchased them and I will be handing them out after service on Sunday, March 3rd.

Registration for the 2019-2020 school year has begun. Classes are already half full so be sure to tell all of your friends and family about our wonderful school. God Bless, Tara Williams - Director



Children's Ministry



Linda Reffert

Well my gosh, the snow and ice have definitely been making worship and church activity attendance a challenge! I keep planning for things thinking surely this weather pattern will end. But then it doesn't!

I want to thank our WOW families and all our staff for their flexibility in scheduling a makeup of our 2nd snow cancellation. Mike Tabler might have had it the worst, what with buying perishable groceries and all, but I know there were several of you who switched around schedules so you could get kids here on the 13th or to be a helper and I really do appreciate it. Thanks to everyone who has come together and helped us be flexible!

Coming up first in March is Family Movie Night on the 3rd at 5 PM. We're going to have a spaghetti dinner before watching Lady and the Tramp. Crafts will follow. It promises to be an awesome night, and it's all free! I have sent invites to our Welcome School families and I want to be sure First Presbyterian folk of ALL AGES know you are invited to join us that evening! And if you come and you can look for just one or two new faces and be sure to welcome them, you will be a great help!

There is no WOW on Wednesday, March 6th because it's Ash Wednesday. I would love to have more of our young families venture to Avery Presbyterian for dinner and worship that night. They are very welcoming and would love to have you and your kids there. We won't have WOW on March 27th because of Spring Break. Bellevue is out all week and I've been told a number of our families have travel plans.

I'm bringing my children's board games and card games for Game Night on Friday, March 8th. We'll have dinner with the adults and then venture down to the Large Group Sunday School room to play.

One Great Hour of Sharing Fish Banks will be passed out on Sunday, March 10th and that following Wednesday. We will suspend our collection of

offering for Presbyterian Mission Giving (\$100 for sewing machines) so that kids can put their offering into their fish banks. I will send some info home about all the good that is done with fish bank offering. Banks will be collected during worship on Palm Sunday, April 14th.

An important date for some of you to note on your calendar is Wednesday, April 10th when we will have our end of the year WOW & illuminate party/ dinner and 6th grade graduation. We have four 6th graders who will be graduating into the Youth Program that evening. Parents (and grandparents) of 6th graders will be our special guests for dinner that evening. There will be a brief program that includes graduation at the end of dinner.

Children who are 3rd through 6th grade are invited to join me for Friday Night Fun on Friday, April 12th from 6 to 9 PM. We'll share a pizza dinner and a fun/ unique Bible Study, mission project and play lots of games (and yes, we will be sure to play Ga Ga Ball). This is an event that kids can bring friends to, but you will need to make reservations, so be thinking ahead if your child(ren) can come and if they might like to bring a friend. I deliberately make it friend-friendly, so don't worry if the friends haven't done Bible study before.

Speaking of inviting friends, our Easter Egg Hunt on Easter morning, April 21st, between worship services will be particularly visitor friendly, so if you have relatives or friends you'd like to bring, ask away!



Youth Fellowship (YF) News



*“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”
Luke 18:16*

I'm excited to move into March, hoping we are done with

Snowmageddon. We've missed so many Sundays and Wednesday I've missed seeing my church family!



bring anything, there is always plenty.

We are making great progress on Youth Sunday and have so many ideas that it will be hard to get it into a 1 hour service. Such a blessing since some years we are pulling for ideas. The youth are very excited about our topics and have so many ideas it is exciting and encouraging for the youth leaders too. It really is a great thing to watch.

The pictures this time are from our Potato Bar Luncheon fundraiser. Thank you all for your support and special thanks for the folks that jumped in the kitchen to help, Deb Hudson, Becca Griffin, Lou & Nancy Worm, Bev Snowden and always Tom, Laura, and John.

Be a Blessing. Shelli



I had the opportunity to attend a Christian Educators conference in Galveston, TX in February and many of the speakers stressed the importance of

intergenerational worship and retreats and mission trips. I was surprised how many congregations have Sunday School during worship so the children and youth aren't part of the services so they never really meet other generations from their own church family. I'm so glad we include everyone in worship.

March 3rd will be a busy day with a Triennium Mixer at 2:00 at Church of the Master then 5:00 Family Movie night here at church. Lady and the Tramp with a spaghetti dinner and crafts will be a fun evening and I hope you will come and bring your friends.

March 6th is the beginning of Lent with our annual soup supper and worship with Avery Church. I hope you will make every effort to go. Let me know if you would like me to save you a seat. Avery is the host church this year so they will provide the soup and we are to bring bread or dessert. Come even if you don't



March Youth Events

- Mar 3** Triennium Mixer 2-4 PC of the Master
Family Movie night 5:00 spaghetti & crafts
- Mar 6** NO Illuminate - Ash Wednesday at Avery
- Mar 14** Lent dinners begin each Thursday of Lent
- Mar 27** No Illuminate - Spring Break



~ March 2019 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 Pantry Sunday 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service 11:30a Deacons Mtg (VVR) 5p Family Movie Night 7p Venture Crew 26	4 12p Music Circle Tea (FH) 1p Women's Bible Study (CR) 1:15p Heritage Ridge 2p Harmony Court 2:45p Richmond Village	5 <i>Mardi Gras</i> 10:30a Staff Meeting (CR) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	6 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> 5:45p Ash Wednesday Service/Dinner (Avery)	7 7p Troop 467	8 6p Game Night (FH)	9
10 Undie Sunday 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service 11:30a Mission Meeting (VVR) 6:30p Boy Scout Committee Meeting (VVR)	11 10:30a PEO (FHMWR)	12 9a BWC Ticket Return (VVR) 5:30p Christian Education Mtg (L) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	13 9a P.E.O. (VVR) 5:30p WOW/Illuminate 6p Finance Mtg (Admin Ofc) 7p Choir Rehearsal	14 6p Lenten Dinner (FH) 7p PW Bible Study (Church classroom) 7p Troop 467	15	16 4:30p Spaghetti Dinner
17 <i>St. Patrick's Day</i> 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service 11:30a Fellowship Mtg (VVR)	18 1p Women's Bible Study (CR) 7p Venture Crew 26	19 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	20 5:30p WOW/Illuminate 7p Choir Rehearsal	21 6p Lenten Dinner (FH) 7p Troop 467	22	23
24 Next Sunday Pantry Sunday 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service	25	26	27 7p Choir Rehearsal	28 12p Ladies Lunch (Papa Reno's) 6p Lenten Dinner (FH) 7p Troop 467 7:30p Session (VVR)	29	30
31 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service	Notes:					



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March Birthdays:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 2 Ken Trinkle | 17 Joy Hartranft |
| 3 Jean Martin | 17 Rick Johnson |
| 3 Joyce Wells | 18 Amber Renter |
| 4 Wendy Fenster | 21 Nadine Buckley |
| 5 Christopher Reilly | 22 Wendy Renter |
| 5 Isaac Rose | 26 Harlan Lewis |
| 10 Brian Wells | 28 Mandi Crick |
| 13 Alfred Grenon | 28 Sylvia Thompson |
| 13 Melissa Young | 30 AnaBelle Betz |
| 13 Grace Hartranft | 30 Genie Fox |
| 15 Patricia Buck | 30 Tessa Rose |
| 15 John Dart | 31 Elaine Smith |
| 16 Dirk Lindner | 31 Kelsi Smith |

