

Hilltop Highlights

A Monthly Publication of First Presbyterian Church

Another First

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar. Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me. By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life. (from Ps 42)

It seems to me that Nebraska is destined to be a land of firsts. Some good, some bad. For the good, my first Runza, my first Husker game, my first glimpse of the stunning beauty of the Midwest. As for the bad, my first blizzard, my first tornado and now, my first flood.

I do not think that I will ever get over the things that I have seen this week. When trying to describe the flooding to friends and family that do not live here, I find myself at a loss for words. How do you describe a road that disappears into a sea of water? Or a neighborhood engulfed up to the rooftops by a river? Or the incredibly painful and disheartening thoughts of friends and family and neighbors who have lost everything. This is not a good first for me, to say the least! I do not think that I will ever be able to process and grasp the magnitude of this past week.

These words from Psalm 42 are the words that come to my mind and I think on where we are right now. It is a Psalm that takes on the exact feelings that we are having. We know now, if we hadn't before, what it means for those waves and breakers to wash over us. We know what it means to be downcast. We know how disturbing the reality of this epic flood is. But can we remember too, in the midst of despair, the love song God sings to us both day and night? Or the praise that is hard to voice right now?

As always, times like these bring to mind those two unspeakable and unanswerable questions. Where is God? Why has God let this happen to us? They are good questions, but they are dangerous ones as well. When I was ordained, one promise that I, personally, made to God was that I would not be His apologist. I cannot speak for God and I cannot explain how God chooses to act or remain inactive.

But I can tell you this. Just as Jesus commanded his disciples to feed the 5000, so God does with us. You feed them! They are your friends and neighbors. You feed them. Be my hands and heart and voice. I want you to, Just trust me.

We are a small congregation. We cannot house the refugees from Bellevue. It is impossible. We cannot do big things. But by God Almighty, we can do many small things. Mother Teresa says, "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."



We can all get a gift card or some bleach or some clothes and bring them to Bellevue Christian Center or the Chamber of Commerce here in town. We can all donate food to the Bellevue Food Pantry through our church. We can lend a hand to our fellow church members in clean-up. We can help sing that love song for God.

This flood and its lingering tragedy is not going to be gone in a week. That is when the tough work of love begins. So, are we in it for the long haul?

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>February</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Income	\$21,275.62	\$87,752.71
Expenses	\$25,763.72	\$68,568.70
Difference	<\$4,488.10	\$19,184.01



Happenings



Lent, A Season of Mercy-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.



Lawn Mowing and Flower Teams

"We've finally been blessed with warmer weather, which means it's time to start thinking about mowing team sign ups for the 2019 growing season. A sign up sheet has been placed on the table in the library if you are interested in helping with mowing or flower bed maintenance around the church campus. Deadline for signing up will be April 14th, with a list of the mowing teams and the season's schedule going out soon after. See Jack, Jean, Bill, or Ryan with any questions."

Spring Clean-up!

The church spring cleanup has been scheduled for Saturday, April 13th at 9:00am. This is an opportunity to get together for fellowship and to work together to clean up the church grounds after a very icy/cold winter. It will also give those of you signing up to help mow this year, an opportunity to get a refresher on this equipment. Donuts and juice will be provided. Hope to see you there!



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!



Happenings

Holy Week 2019

April 18th- Our Maundy Thursday Worship Service will start at 7:00pm. Child care will be not be provided. (No dinner will be served this evening.)

April 21st Easter Sunday:

- ◆ Worship Services will be at 8:30 am and 10:30 am.
- ◆ Everyone is invited to the Easter breakfast served by the Deacons at 9:30 am.
- ◆ Children's Easter Egg Hunt 9:45 am.
- ◆ Nursery Care provided during both services.
- ◆ No Sunday School classes will be held.

Church Office will be closed on Monday, April 22nd

Annual Church Garage Sale

Friday, April 26th (9am to 1pm)
Saturday, April 27th (9am to 1pm)



Clean out your basement, closets and garage, of all those unwanted things and bring them to the church starting:

- ◆ Monday through Thursday, April 22nd through April 25th from 9:00am to 7:00pm
- ◆ Friday, April 26th from 9:00am to 4:00pm

Please, no tires, chemicals, computers, computer monitors, mattresses, adult clothing, rear projection,

console or CRT TVs, baby seats, baby cribs or items that are dirty, don't work or are broken.

All proceeds from the sale will go to local mission. If you can volunteer your time that week as well as work the days of the sale we need folks to sort and price items. There will be signup sheets in the foyer. Even if you can only work a few hours that will help greatly.

Thank you, your Fellowship Committee.

If you have a large item needing a pickup please contact Cathy Talmadge at 402-291-4157. If you can assist Cathy during the week of April 22nd– April 26th please contact her directly.

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





ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The three programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing — Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People — all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope.

Received during the season of lent, each gift to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) helps to improve the lives of people in these challenging situations. The Offering provides us a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need. In fact, OGHS is the single, largest way that Presbyterians come together every year to work for a better world.

One Great Hour of Sharing, makes a difference in the world.

PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (PDA)

- ◆ Works alongside communities as they recover and find hope after the devastation of natural or human-caused disasters, and support for refugees.
(They are currently in our area providing supplies for flood victims)
- ◆ Receives 32% of funds raised

PRESBYTERIAN HUNGER PROGRAM (PHP)

- ◆ Takes action to alleviate hunger, care for creation, and the systemic causes of poverty so all may be fed.
- ◆ Receives 36% of funds raised

SELFSDEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE (SDOP)

- ◆ Invests in communities responding to their experiences of oppression, poverty and injustice and educates Presbyterians about the impact of these issues.
- ◆ Receives 32% of funds raised

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





OMAHA GIVES!

powered by the Omaha Community Foundation

Church Property Beautification

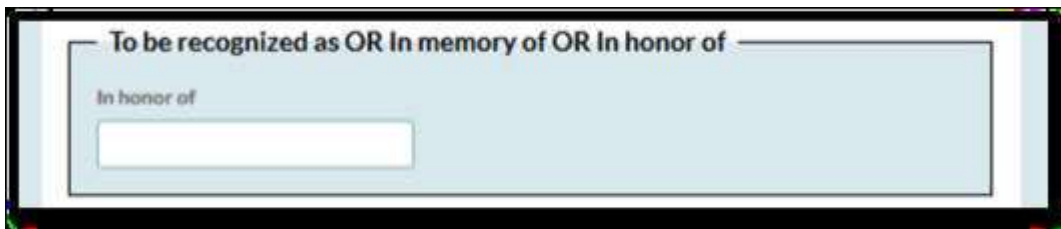
Why? To provide improved curb appeal and overall appearance of our wonderful church property.

Your donation will help us fulfill a Building and Grounds Committee unfunded project to make our church more attractive: Improved landscaping at our two entrance signs and along Bellevue Boulevard; Trees need trimming and new trees/shrubs planted; Badly worn picnic tables need to be replaced; Other improvements are also needed.

How We All Can Help-

Every gift makes a difference. Minimum donation is \$10.

- ◆ Visit www.omahagives.org/nonprofits.
- ◆ Search for First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue.
- ◆ Schedule gifts online between May 1 and May 21. Charges are processed on May 22nd.
- ◆ Donate online on May 22nd beginning at midnight. Your donations can help us win prize money and matching dollars donated by corporations.
- ◆ You can donate in memory of someone.



- ◆ You will receive an immediate thank you and tax receipt from the Omaha Community Foundation.
- ◆ Our goal is to raise \$5,000.00 to cover the cost of property beautification.
- ◆ It's easy to make a gift on your smart phone.



Thanks for your support!



God and the Girls Inter-generational Women's Retreat

First Presbyterian Church
Saturday, June 8, 2019
9:00AM to 12:00PM



Enjoy an encouraging, affirming morning.
Bring someone special and nurture the relationship with each other, and with God.
Want to bring more than one special person? Do!
Food, friendship, prayer, music, scripture & a game or two.
Enjoy old friends and make new ones too!
\$10 registration with scholarships available.
Ages 9 to 109. Children under 13 must be accompanied by an adult.
Questions? See Linda Reffert or email lkreffert@aol.com

DEBT PAY-OFF CAMPAIGN UPDATE

As of March 24, 2019

First Presbyterian Church's outstanding building loan balance is now down to \$171,287. 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 \$36,927. 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



Each quarter, the AmazonSmile Foundation will make a donation to First Presbyterian Church. When first visiting AmazonSmile, customers are prompted to select a charitable organization where .5% of their eligible purchases will be donated to our church.

If you are not an AmazonSmile customer please log in to Amazon.com and go to help and type in Amazon Smile . Click on the Amazon Smile logo and you will be prompted get started and to select an organization. You must be logged in to Amazon Smile (<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/47-0379376>) to shop in order for your purchases to qualify.

If you are already an AmazonSmile customer and have selected an organization and you wish to change to First Presbyterian Church you can do so by going to Amazon.com and repeating the steps above.





Hebrews 6:10 (NIV)

¹⁰ God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.

News from Welcome School

Spring is finally here! The children at Welcome School are certainly ready for some nicer weather so they can play outside. We've been keeping ourselves busy in the meantime doing a lot of activities. Riding our trikes up and down the hallway has always been a great wintertime tradition! All of the classes had pajama day. That's a fun day the kids wear their jammies, read books, and eat pancakes. Some pesky Leprechauns visited the classrooms leaving behind their footprints and a tasty gold treat!



New families are inquiring about Welcome School and tours are happening weekly. Registration for the 2019-2020 school year, is in full swing. Please call the office if you have any questions or if someone is interested in registering at (402) 291-1150.

Thank you and God bless!
Tara Williams – Director



Children's Ministry



Linda Reffert

CALLING ALL WOMEN!

On Saturday, June 8th from 9 AM to 12 PM we're going to host an intergenerational women's retreat entitled God and the Girls. We intend for it to be affirming and encouraging.

We would love to have you participate, AND we'd love for you to bring at least one woman who is special to you – whether it's your mom, grandma, daughter, granddaughter, sister, neighbor, best friend, new friend – you get the idea! You can bring more than one person if you'd like. All participants must be at least 9 years old (and 9 to 12 year olds must be accompanied by an adult) but there is no upper age limit. We are hoping we have participants from every generation between 9 and 109! We will share prayer, laughter, music, food, scripture, stories and small group discussion. Some groups will be strictly adult and some will be mixed age – and you can choose! We hope you will walk out the door at the end of the event feeling closer to the special person(s) you brought and closer to God. The cost is just \$10 per person, which includes breakfast. Scholarships are available. Registration will open in mid-April. If you have any questions or you would like to join the planning team, please see me.

It's hard to believe WOW is winding down for the year. As I write this, we have 2 more meetings. And one of those includes 6th grade Graduation. Yikes! Our 6th graders who will be graduating are: Katie Crick, Jonathan Robertson, David Rose and Cameron Tarvin. We are sure going to miss them in WOW but are excited to see them move on to Illuminate.

We had a good year studying Christian Character in WOW. The kids knew way more than I thought they might about each of the characters we discussed. And they knew virtually all of the related Bible stories. The thing we all need practice in though, is remembering what we know about

how to act like a Christian, when we are in everyday life and a sibling makes us really mad or when temptation appears right in front of us. Knowing something and applying it each and every day, in happy situations and trying situations, is a little different. I think most of us struggle with that from time to time.

Easter is April 21st and CE will once again sponsor an Easter Egg Hunt for children, in between worship services. The Check In table will be in Fellowship Hall. This hunt is for members and visitors. Children under the age of 4 should be accompanied by a youth or adult. I don't want anyone getting trampled or lost. We would really appreciate donations of small wrapped candy that can be stuffed into Easter Eggs. No hard candy please. There will be a basket for donations under the Registration Table in the Library or you can drop them off in the Children's Ministry office. And I thank you sincerely in advance for any and all donations.

I want to thank Kathryn, David, Ian and Daniel Rose, Cathy Talmadge, Jean Lindfors, Jean Jacobson, Jane Hink, Liane Kirmis and Nancy Shultz for their help already with VBS decorating. I think the Reilly family is going to help, and Sharon Elliott & Mary Lehr too. Anyone else is welcome to help in large and small ways. Our church is huge and even decorating on a small scale is a lot of work, that is so much easier and more fun when shared.

I have a number of volunteers already for the week of VBS but I am always looking for more, for everything from Registration to Kitchen to Shepherd to Games Leader. The week is July 22nd through the 26th, from 9 AM to noon. I'll be honest - VBS is tiring, consuming, loud and chaotic. But man oh man, is it rewarding! We just need to find you a position you can feel confident and good about. We get so many kids from the community besides our own darlings and there is just nothing better than sharing God's awesome and abounding love with kids who soak it up with amazement. There really isn't! It is a holy experience.



Youth Fellowship (YF) News



*“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 1:6*



We were blessed to confirm Morgan, Emerson, Jackson, Nellie and Emma into active membership in March. They began their new roles in church by going before session and serving communion during worship. I am so pleased that our youth are willing and interested in being truly active members.

With all the flooding impacting our community I am so proud to be part of a church that cares so much for their neighbors. With one announcement we immediately received almost \$300 donations with more funds and items donated the next days to follow. With your support we are raising faithful, community minded young people and I can not say thank you enough.

The school year is winding down so the kiddos are busy with papers, projects, assignments and still dedicate time to prepare a wonderful Youth Sunday and remain mission minded and active.

I hope Youth Sunday resonated with all of you as much as it has with us. Starting this fall after Pastor Mike preached about King David the youth were so curious to hear the rest of the story. Traditional Bible stories for children focus so much on the goodness and heroism of biblical characters that they can be unrelatable. They were intrigued to learn so many of



God’s chosen people are flawed and imperfect. I think that with society’s focus on perfection and beauty this was a refreshing and reassuring ideas of study. That’s why I chose the above scripture, it doesn’t say God expects perfection from us, just that he began a good work in us and He will perfect that good work, not that we will.

We are planning a Lunch and Laundry day for April 6th for our neighbors impacted by the flood. Thank you in advance for those helping to cook food and those helping at the laundromat. Simple acts of service, feeding people, helping people clean their belongings speak God’s love so loudly.

April 7th is our Open Door Mission serving night. If you would like to join us some time please let me know. It is an eye opening and wonderful experience.

Enjoy the dawning of Spring, I hope that it will renew all of our spirits.

Be a Blessing. Shelli



April Youth Events

- Apr 6** Lunch and Laundry day
- Apr 7** Open Door Mission 4:30-7:30pm
- Apr 10** Last Illuminate 6th Grade Graduation
- Apr 21** Easter Sunday - No Sunday School

Fun Day April or May - ideas?



~ April 2019 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 1p Women's Bible Study (CR) 1:15p Heritage Ridge 2p Harmony Court 2:45p Richmond Village	2 10:30a Staff Meeting (CR) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	3 5:30p WOW/Illuminate 7p Choir Rehearsal	4 6p Lenten Dinner (FH) 7p Troop 467	5	6
7 Pantry Sunday 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service 11:30a Deacons Mtg (VVR) 11:30a New Member Discovery Class 4:30p Youth Active Service/ Open Door Mission 6:30p Boy Scout Committee Meeting (VVR) 7p Venture Crew 26	8 10:30a PEO (FHMVR)	9 5:30p Christian Education Mtg (L) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	10 9a P.E.O. (VVR) 5:30p WOW/Illuminate 6p Building & Grounds Mtg (CR) 7p Choir Rehearsal	11 6p Lenten Dinner (FH) 7p PW Bible Study (Church Classroom) 7p Troop 467 7:30p Membership (VVR) 7:30p Worship Mtg (CR)	12 6p Friday Night Fun	13
14 Palm Sunday Undie Sunday 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service 11:30a Fellowship Mtg (VVR) 11:30a Mission Meeting (CR) 5p Crossroads Connection	15 1p Women's Bible Study (CR) 7p Venture Crew 26	16 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	17 7p Choir Rehearsal	18 Holy Thursday 7p Maundy Thursday Service 7p Troop 467	19 Good Friday	20
21 Easter 8:30a Easter Sunday Service 9:30a Easter Breakfast 9:45a Easter Egg Hunt 10:30a Easter Sunday Service	22 Earth Day Church Office is Closed	23 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	24 Administrative Professionals 7p Choir Rehearsal	25 12p Ladies Lunch (American Heroes) 7p Session (VVR) 7p Troop 467	26 Arbor Day 9a Garage Sale	27 9a Garage Sale
28 Next Sunday Pantry Sunday 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service	29	30 5:30p Lions Club (VVR) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	Notes:			



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April Birthdays:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Carter Dawson | 22 Taylor Bloom |
| 1 Bev Snowden | 22 Gabbie Emsick |
| 1 Eliza Boyd | 23 Kim O'Riordan |
| 3 Sylvia Pelzer | 25 Linda Hilfiker |
| 3 Audie Keaton | 25 Josh Blazek |
| 4 Don Schlafman | 26 Megan Warren |
| 6 Deb Hudson | 27 Carolyn Hess |
| 15 Retha Dowding | 27 Ann MacKinnon |
| 17 Lori Keaton | 27 Mary Nelson |
| 17 Madison Braun | 28 LeAnn Jobes |
| 18 Marcie deZafra | 28 Eoin Healey |
| 19 Devin Glenn | 29 Cindy Reilly |
| 21 Eric VanSky | 30 Scott Reffert |
| 21 Jake VanRyckeghem | |

