

Hilltop Highlights

A Monthly Publication of First Presbyterian Church

Trouble In Paradise

“I urge you, as I did when I was on my way to Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus so that you may instruct certain people not to teach any different doctrine, and not to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies that promote speculations rather than the divine teaching that is known by faith.” (1 Timothy 1:3-4)

“So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called “the uncircumcision” by those who are called “the circumcision”—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands—remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. (Ephesians 2:11-14)

Sometimes we tend to have a very idealized view of the Early Church, that is, the Church that existed during the First Century CE. We like to think that the Early Church existed without any internal problems at all. That all of the problems that the early Church faced were external.

The external problem of persecution at the hands of Rome was a very real and constant threat to Christians living in the first few centuries after Christ’s resurrection. Torture, forfeiture of property and death were an ongoing danger. Paul is very clear about this threat in his letters. But there were internal threats to the early Christians as well and these threats were even more disruptive and harmful to the early church.

You see, external threats have a way of bringing a group together, united against a common enemy, and making them more cohesive. Internal threats have a way of tearing a group apart and dividing loyalties. This is a common theme of Paul’s letters. As you read his and letters from other authors in the New Testament in the weeks ahead, keep alert for the clues Paul and others give.

There were two main divisive issues that were prevalent in the Early Church. In the passage from 1 Timothy, Paul addresses the first issue, that of false teachings. Or, to put it another way, heresies and heretics that were active in the church spreading ideas that were not consistent with the Gospel. Oftentimes, these “false teachers” could be quite persuasive and were leading early believers away from the faith. The Nicene Creed, from 325 CE is an attempt to combat some of these false teachings.



In Ephesians, chapter 2, Paul addresses the other major internal problem. The early church was made up of Jewish converts and Gentile believers. Some of the Jewish Christians felt that in order to be a Christian, Gentiles must first be circumcised and follow the Law before they could be followers of Jesus. Paul will take on this faction in the early church time and again repeatedly writing against this mindset.

As you continue your “Through The Bible In A Year” reading, be on the lookout for these internal tensions and how Scripture deals with them.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Mike



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We Keep in Our Prayers

- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Prayers for George Thompson who is suffering with Parkinson's disease.

Bakersplus.com

We just received the **Second Quarter** of 2019 rebate from Bakers for **\$217.42** this is wonderful and 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>June</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Income	\$20,100.48	\$206,784.21
Expenses	\$32,514.34	\$186,650.89
Difference	<\$12,413.86	\$20,133.32



Happenings



The Arrows to Aerospace parade will be marching down Mission Avenue on
Saturday, August 17th.

This is a great opportunity to show people the spirit and mission of First Presbyterian Church.

The Fellowship Committee is looking for volunteers to help decorate the float on Friday evening the 16th at 5:30pm, after decorating, the helpers all go to LaMesa for Dinner. If you plan on helping decorate the float and go to LaMesa please call Rick Holbert so he can make reservations for the correct number of people at 402-291-7637.

We also need CHILDREN, YOUTH and ADULTS, to participate in the parade. We need people to ride on our float and people to walk alongside. Please meet at the church no later than 8:30am on Saturday morning wearing your church shirt if you have one.

Let's show our community what a strong, exciting church we are!

If you can participate please place your name on the sign up sheet in the library.



Happenings

Intergenerational Sunday School

On Sunday, August 4th we will have our final Intergenerational Sunday School of the summer. We will meet in the Valley Vista Room at 9:00 AM. From there, after prayer, individuals and groups will be disbursed throughout the church to provide service to the church. Opportunities for service will range from washing Nursery toys, to organizing some Library books, cleaning white boards. A small group will stay in Valley Vista, sharpening pencils and checking and restocking markers. If we have enough willing to help or there is particular interest, we will send some to work on the Kitchen.



Come Ring With Us! Westminster Bells will begin rehearsals Tuesday, August 20th at 7:00pm, and we need some helping hands. Please consider sharing your musical gifts and come join the bell choir! Middle school students through adults are welcome, no prior experience is necessary. If you can read music, we'll teach you the rest! Contact Liane Kirmis for more information at 402-296-5751. Help us make a joyful noise to the Lord!

Join us for **Ladies' Lunch**. We are meeting on the **Fourth Thursday** of each month at noon. In August we are going to meet at John's Grecian Delight on August 22nd. Please call or email the church office if you plan on attending 402-291-1104 or admin@bellevuefpc.org



For many years, **Presbyterian Women (PW)**, the women's organization of the Presbyterian Church (USA), played an active role in First Presbyterian Church in Bellevue. Several years after the local PW group disbanded, a Bible Study group continues after more than 40 years. We meet the 2nd Thursday each month, September thru May, at 7:00pm. We will begin a new study on September 12, 2019.



This year we will use the Presbyterian Women Horizons Bible Study, *Love Carved in Stone: A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments*. We welcome new participants to join us. Contact Marsha Holbert at 402.639.3695 to get a study book and details.

FILE OF LIFE		
KEEP INFORMATION UP TO DATE !! Review At Least Every Six Months!		
MEDICAL DATA REVIEWED AS OF	MO.	YR.
Name:		
Address:		
Doctor:	Phone #:	
Preferred hospital:		
EMERGENCY CONTACTS		
Name:	Phone #:	
Address:		
Name:	Phone #:	

Medical ID cards for wallet or purse and magnetic "refrigerator pockets" with health are on the shelf outside church office window; courtesy of UNMC and Bellevue Fire Department.



DEBT PAY-OFF CAMPAIGN UPDATE

As of July 21, 2019

First Presbyterian Church's outstanding building loan balance now stands at \$147,834. 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 only \$21,423. With continuing pledged and non-pledged, contributions we will be able to make loan payments for all of 2019 and perhaps the first couple of months of 2020 without impacting the Operating Budget---BUT NOT BEYOND.

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 early? 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

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Results as of June 16, 2019

- 2019 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN: Commitment Sunday was September 30, 2018. Goal was for pledges of \$255,00. Received so far 91 pledges totaling \$258,100. Contributions to date \$160,893.
- 2019 RETIRE THE DEBT CAMPAIGN. One year campaign to hopefully retire the church debt by the end of 2019. Received so far 34 pledges for \$50,065. Contributions to date \$27,150 including \$2,700 non-pledged.
- American National Bank loan balance is down to \$147,834. Monthly loan payment is \$6,372.98. Loan is at a fixed rate of 3.7% for 5 years. Refinancing in October 2016 saved the church over \$16,000 in interest expense. If we can pay off the loan by early 2020 even more substantial savings can be realized.
- 2020 Vision Fund balance \$48,908. SEE NOTE #1 BELOW.
- Debt Pay-off account balance stands at \$21,423. Hopefully with 2019 pledged and unpledged donations we will have enough money to make the monthly payments into early 2020 without negatively impacting the 2019 Operating Budget.
- 2019 Per Capita Campaign is ongoing. So far \$8,646 has been received. This is 78% of the church's 2019 assessment of \$11,107.
- 2019 Omaha Gives Campaign was May 22nd. "Church Property Beautification". Goal was to receive donations totaling \$5,000. Received Campaign check for \$4,930. With additional donations paid directly to the church, the account stands at approximately \$6,000 Beautification work is in progress.
- Time & Talent Forms. If you haven't recently updated your T&T Form, please do so. Form is on=line or request a hard copy from the office.
- NOTE #1: In November 2017 Session voted to transfer about \$27,416 to the general fund/operating budget to help cover the Director of Children's Ministry 2018 salary. This amount was adjusted to \$24,416 at the end of 2018 to reflect the 2018 budget surplus.

Submitted by: Bob Jeffus
Chair, Stewardship Committee



Children's Choir Director

We are currently hiring for the Children's Choir Director position with an effective start date of August 1st. If you are interested please contact Linda Reffert at lkreffert@aol.com.

This position includes the following requirements: (additional requirements are not listed)

- ◆ Coordinate, instruct and lead music ministry for our children ages PreK through 6th grade.
- ◆ Provide inspiration and leadership for an enjoyable music experience as part of the curriculum for children enrolled in the W.O.W. program for one hour each Wednesday evening during the program's school year term and children enrolled in the Church School program for one hour each Sunday during the nine month school term, and for 3 hours each day during our one week summer VBS program.
- ◆ Design, develop and coordinate a Children's Christmas program for worship with the Pastor/ Head of Staff, Chancel Choir Director and Organist
- ◆ Provide accompaniment on the piano, CD player or computer during all children's rehearsals.
- ◆ Coordinate with the Pastor/ Head of Staff, Director of Children's Ministries, Chancel Choir Director, and the Worship Committee the schedule for children's involvement in worship or special services.
- ◆ Design, develop and coordinate a Children's Christmas program for worship with the Pastor/ Head of Staff, Chancel Choir Director and Organist.
- ◆ Select music for and rehearse the children's vocal choir.
- ◆ Receive input from the Director of Children's Ministries in the selection of the music to coordinate it with the emphasis of the children's curriculum.
- ◆ Provide input to the Worship Committee regarding budget for music or other needs of the children's music ministry.
- ◆ Coordinate use of materials, music equipment and facilities with other music staff.

Making a Joyful Noise

I would like to thank everyone who has participated in summer music here at First Presbyterian Church. We are so blessed to have so many wonderful musicians in our congregation!

It is almost time to get back to work, so I have some dates here for the choir, I will also send everyone an email (or my secretary will) as time gets closer.

The choir picnic will be on Wednesday, August 21st, at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Since many of us are trying to eat a little healthier, we will not be having fried chicken this year as our main course. Instead, Steve will be smoking us chicken (He can't sing well, but he is great with the grill!)

We will rehearse on Wednesday, August 28th, and on Wednesday, September 2nd. We will be back in the loft on Sunday, September 8th. We have some new music which I hope everyone will enjoy!

I hope that you all have a great rest of the summer, and I'm looking forward to getting back with everyone. Stay safe (and healthy).

Making a Joyful Noise, Alice



Children's Ministry



Linda Reffert

As I write this, we just finished our first morning of VBS. What a terrific group of volunteers and kiddos! I am so proud to be involved in this VBS and I sure hope everyone else is too. Today's Bible Point was "Even when you are left out, Jesus loves you!" We all need that reminder from time to time, don't we!

If I write the names of all the people I need to thank, I won't have room for anything else. And I will most likely forget one or more names. I don't want either of those to happen. But please know, your service, whether it is hands-on with the kids or in the Kitchen or Decorating or wherever, you are appreciated and you made a difference. You really did! Most years, I figure out what positions I would like to fill, and then what positions I NEED to fill, to be minimally functioning. This year, First Presbyterian volunteers filled all my "NEED" list AND all my "like to fill list". Without me doing one bit of begging. What a great gift! That means less pressure on everyone and more personal attention for the kids.

I want to thank all the adults who participated in the Jonah Bible Study in July. That was a lot of fun! We had about 20 people and I think Jonah resonated with most or all of us in ways we really wish he didn't. I know there have been a number of times in the past, when I have really wanted to help someone, but I want to make the decision about who I help and whether or not they deserve my help. I get something different out of this book every time I read it, but my personal lesson this time, is that I need to be open to who God wants me to help, whether or not I agree. It was really fun and interesting to hear the different things that stood out to others. God is always speaking to us, isn't He! It's just a matter of choosing to pay attention and to obey.

A number of women and girls have asked me when we would host another God & The Girls Retreat. Just a heads up that the tentative date for the next retreat is Saturday, October 19th from 9 to noon. That's a

bye week for the Huskers, just in case you were wondering. Our whole leadership team for the first retreat is coming back, which is wonderful! I am hoping to have a Food Coordinator added to the team, but otherwise we are set. It will be an intergenerational retreat and focus on gratitude. You are welcome to bring guests any time but I won't be pushing the bringing of guests this time around.

Heads up for Fall. Sunday School Kickoff celebration will be at 9 AM on Sunday, September 8th for all ages. WOW and Illuminate will kick off on Wednesday, September 11th at 5:30. I do need a table parent or two and a shepherd for the youngest group. There is no prep or teaching involved in either job and they can be combined. Please let me know if you are interested.

In Sunday School, we will be continuing with our curriculum where we left off in the spring. In WOW, we will be focusing on the Parables of Jesus this year. We will read and discuss a particular parable one week and then play a game or do a craft relating to the parable the next Wednesday. And of course, we will share joys and concerns and prayer each week.

A registration form and letter about plans for the year will be going out this month to each family who has a child already registered in our Children's Program. If you would like your child or grandchild to be added to my mailing list, please let me know, ASAP. Just a reminder that Sunday School is available for ages 3 (and potty-trained) through 6th grade. WOW begins with children currently enrolled in Kindergarten and goes through 6th grade. The kids are divided into a younger and an older grouping and they do Music and Faith Education with other kids that are their approximate age.

Children in 2nd grade through 6th grade are invited to complete training to become an acolyte in Worship. I will be sending home information about when the training will be. Kids need to be mature enough to understand that they are helping to lead worship and they also need to be tall enough to reach the candles, at least from the bottom step. Acolyting is done by kids during the Sunday School year.



Youth Fellowship (YF) News



Here's My Heart Lord Take and Seal It -

Here's My Heart was the theme of Triennium this year and we were fortunate to send 12 folks from our church in the 76 person

this without them this year but particularly this trip because I was the leader for all 76 people and things at registration went a bit wonky, I knew I could focus on that and leave the kids up to both of them because they are not only wonderful and supportive but they love these kiddos and I knew they would be in great hands. Thank you so much!



delegation from Missouri River Valley.

We traveled over night Monday to arrive at Perdue University, unload 2 charter buses Tuesday afternoon and begin our adventure.

We were among the fortunate and had air conditioned dorms but our dorms were also 1 mile away from the campus. We walked an average of 9 miles per day while there but I think all attending would say it was well worth it. We had small groups, game times, prayer center, event center, dynamic worship and fantastic speakers.

I must thank you all for your support of the fundraisers we do each year. This helps keep the cost down per attendee and enables us to take a large delegation each time. I also need to thank John and Laura for all off their support. I could not have done

The summer is winding down and it's almost time to get back to the regular schedule. It seems like summer is gone in a blink but I'm going to be very happy to get back together with everyone and welcome the new 7th graders into the group. We will start back to Sunday School and Illuminate after Labor Day but please keep an eye on your email in the coming weeks for dessert and laundry sign-ups. We appreciate the help of all the parents in keeping things running so smoothly.

Because of the flooding I was worried that the Hansen Lake back to school party would be cancelled but the Tablers have offered their lake to us. We will do that on a Sunday afternoon in late August tbd.

Have a great rest of your summer, be safe and be a blessing. Shelli



~ August 2019 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7p Troop 467	2	3
4 Pantry Sunday 9a Inter-Generational Sunday School 10a Worship Service 11a Deacons Mtg (VVR) 12p Fellowship at Mahoney 4:30p Youth Active Service/ Open Door Mission 7p Venture Crew 26	5 1:15p Heritage Ridge 2p Harmony Court 2:45p Richmond Village	6 10:30a Staff Meeting (CR)	7	8 6p Building & Grounds Mtg (CR) 6:30p Membership (VVR) 7p Troop 467 7p Worship Mtg (CR)	9	10 8:30a Arrows to Aerospace Parade
11 Undie Sunday 10a Worship Service 11a Congregational Meeting 5p Crossroads Connection 6:30p Boy Scout Committee Meeting (VVR)	12 10:30a PEO (FHMVR)	13 5:30p Christian Education Mtg (L)	14 9a P.E.O. (VVR)	15 7p Troop 467	16	17
18 10a Worship Service 11a Fellowship Mtg (VVR)	19 7p Venture Crew 26	20 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	21 6p Choir Picnic (FH)	22 12p Ladies Lunch (John's Grecian Delight) 7p Session (VVR) 7p Troop 467	23	24
25 Next Sunday Pantry Sunday 10a Worship Service	26	27 12p Newsletter Due 6p Welcome School Orientation (FH) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal 7p Troop 499 Committee Mtg (VVR)	28 6p Welcome School Orientation (FH) 7p Choir Rehearsal	29 7p Troop 467	30	31

Worshipping, learning, and serving together in the name of Jesus



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August Birthdays:

1 Sara Renner	15 Val Jean Hansen	23 Walt Griffiths
2 Florence Maurer	15 Dan Robertson	25 Betty Cash
3 Morgan Fenster	15 Don Glenn	25 Marilyn Parker
3 Will Kroeger	16 Marylou Hegarty	26 Mike Elliott
4 Mattie Carver	17 Nancy Worm	28 Denise Seaman
4 Matt Fenster	17 Kathryn Robertson	29 Dan Clark
6 Steve Tamayo	18 Nancy Shultz	29 Blake Urwin
7 Noelle Kilpatrick	18 Linda Reffert	
7 JoAnne Nielsen	19 Gary Marks	
11 Gene Cash	21 Mary Lehr	
11 Suzanne Zipse	21 Carl Seaman	
12 Elliott Rose	22 Sue Howard	
12 Steve Renner	22 Dave Norton	
13 Dan Wilson	22 Mary Jo Schiefelbein	



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