

Hilltop Highlights

A Monthly Publication of First Presbyterian Church

Like Sheep Among Wolves

“These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give. “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. (Matthew 10:5-8, 16)

Sometimes our walk with Christ puts us in the position of being sent out as sheep among wolves. Jesus’ advice to us is to be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. This is a time in our church life that we must be as shrewd as snakes!

Many of you have received at least once a very suspect email purporting to be from me. I will confess that it looks very real and very convincing. The person emailing says that I “Reverend Michael,” need your help. No one but my mother uses Michael to refer to me and Reverend is a term none of us ever uses! I set up a fake email account to respond to this individual. Ultimately he was requesting that I purchase an ebay gift card for a cancer patient that I was seeing and email him the information from the back of the card. My fake me can be rather compelling! Ultimately I told him to stop preying on innocent people. Hopefully that has put a stop to the nonsense.

Now, for the shrewd as snakes part. I have said this in church at least twice now, this is something we must all be very careful about. Here is the bottom line:

Neither I nor any staff member will ever, under any circumstances, ask you for money or gift cards by email. If there is ever a situation where we might need your help, we will always ask you in person or by phone. If we have time to email you, we certainly have time to call. Additionally, I do not use “Michael” or “Reverend” to refer to myself.



If there is ever any doubt, **do not** reply to an email. Call the church office or me personally before you do anything. If no one answers at church, my contact information will be on the message that follows.

It is both distressing and heartbreaking that this is the world that we now live in and that we must be very suspicious of every email or phone call that we receive. Shrewd as snakes is how Christ calls us to be though. Please keep this person in your prayers.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Mike



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We Keep in Our Prayers

- ◆ Prayers for Nadine Buckley for continued healing
- ◆ Prayers for John Wallace who has been diagnosed with Dementia
- ◆ Prayers for Virginia Eidenmiller who is now living at Mabel Rose
- ◆ Prayers for Chuck Nelson who was recently hospitalized

Financial Information

	<u>January</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Income	*\$59,564.88	\$59,564.88
Expenses	<u>\$41,121.99</u>	<u>\$41,121.99</u>
Difference	\$18,442.89	\$18,442.89

* this income includes pre-pledge and \$19,000.00 from Foundation



Happenings

Lent In Plain Sight

Lenten Suppers- Dinner will be offered on four Thursday nights during Lent, March 5, 12, 19 and April 2nd. 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.



Sunday, March 8th

Butter Braids

Welcome School will deliver Butter Braid orders to church on Sunday March 15th.



Join us for **Ladies' Lunch**. We are meeting on the **Third Thursday** of each month at **11:30am**. In March we are going to meet on the 19th at Romeo's. Please call or email **Bev Snowden** if you plan on attending **402-291-7653** or **bevsnowden2017@gmail.com**.



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 10:30am service that day. They are \$10.00 each and can be ordered from the Worship Committee on Sunday mornings March 22nd, 29th and April 5th.



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



Spaghetti Dinner

Our Annual Spaghetti Dinner will be held Saturday, March 28th,
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.

There will be 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 Wednesday, March 25th. Please indicate an approximate value and your name, phone number and address.

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

This is one of our largest fundraisers.

While the event is sponsored by the Fellowship committee, we need the help of the entire congregation.

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 Wednesday, March 25th).
- ☺ 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 Library on Sundays before or after church through March 25th.

If you are selling tickets please turn in your money and unsold tickets as soon as possible no later than Sunday, March 22nd.

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!



Happenings

Holy Week 2020

April 9th- Our Maundy Thursday Worship Service will start at 7:00pm. Child care will not be provided. (No dinner will be served this evening.)

April 10th Good Friday: Worship Service at Noon.

April 12th Easter Sunday:

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

Church Office will be closed on Monday, April 13th

Annual Church Garage Sale

Saturday, April 25th (8am 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 20th through April 23rd from 9:00am to 7:00pm
- ◆ Friday, April 24th 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 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 20th– April 24th please contact her directly.

Per Capita

We have collected \$6,807.30 as of February 23rd and still need to collect \$4,294.70 (This amount has been taken from the General Fund to cover the total amount of \$11,102.00 that was due by February 15th).

Please take a moment and submit your Per Capita. 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.



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



DEBT PAY-OFF CAMPAIGN UPDATE

As of February 23, 2020

FPC loan balance is down to \$106,098. The Building Fund contains \$33,755 which will pay the monthly payments through August 2020. At that time, the balance will be approximately \$75,000.

Please continue with your contributions. If we can raise enough money to make payments through December, and if we can raise another \$40,000 at the end of this year, we can have the remaining debt fully paid off EARLY which will save FPC another \$1,000 to \$2,000 in interest expense.

Please continue to use the pink envelopes for your contributions. And, again, THANK YOU VERY MUCH 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

Building a Household with the Suffering and Vulnerable

If I asked you to close your eyes while I said the word “household,” what would come to mind? Caring people? A table with food, shared with family and friends? Shelter? Warmth? Friendly voices? Love? Yet there are many in this world who don’t enjoy those comforts that we may automatically think of when we hear that word Household.

People like Mimita whose home and life in Puerto Rico were literally torn apart by Hurricane Maria. Or like Abdi who lost her husband and had to trek for days with her small children through a war-torn region of Somalia to bring the family to a place where they could find food and shelter. Did I mention that she was pregnant at the time?

And Monica, whose day-to-day peace of mind was threatened by a predatory landlord who brought false charges against her time after time as he tried to evict her in order to rent her New Jersey apartment for more money.

What do you think these three women think when they hear the word “household?” Not comfort but perhaps discomfort. Not a hot meal but wondering where the next meal is coming from. Not shelter and warmth but sky above where once a roof had been.



But this is not the end of these stories, for where there is life, there is hope. Where God is, there is hope. Together, we become the household of God. Through **One Great Hour of Sharing**, we extend shelter to those who have no place to stay, offer compassion to those who have pain, be it physical, emotional or spiritual and we set a feast, with God, for those who lack access to enough food to eat. May we be called, as Isaiah said, to be “repairers of the breach.” To be the church in the world and active followers of our faith.

Envelope will be placed in the pews beginning March 22nd for your convenience and the final day for donations will be Palm Sunday, April 5th



Three ways you can help raise funds for First Presbyterian Church

Bakersplus.com

We just received the **Fourth Quarter** of 2019 rebate from Bakers for **\$211.99** this is wonderful and includes **45** 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.



We have joined **TAGG (Together a Greater Good)**. They donate a percentage of your purchase from a variety of businesses directly to First Presbyterian Church. Just download their app to your phone and select First Presbyterian Church to support and you will see a large list of participating vendors in the Bellevue, Papillion and Omaha areas. **Hy-Vee has now joined and will donate 1% of each total purchase to First Presbyterian Church.** Just take a picture of your full receipt once you have downloaded the TAGG app. **We are very excited to announce we received our first check for \$30.13 from 4 participants.**

Amazon Smile

Please be sure to go (<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/47-0379376>) when ordering your from Amazon. **We have received \$334.71 since inception.**

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.



Making a Joyful Noise

I was recently reminded of how cool our hymnal really is. This person said that when she gets to church early, she likes to look at what the hymnal says at the bottom of the page, where there is a brief explanation about the hymn. I looked up what it said about “Be Still, My Soul” (one of my favorite hymns). It Says: This meditative text seems to be rooted in Psalm 46:10, “Be Still and Know that I am God”, while also reaching forward to 1 Thessalonians 4:17b “we will be with the Lord forever.” Much of the appeal of this hymn comes from its tune, named for the tone poem on which it is based. This tune is named FINLANDIA which was written by Jean Sibelius in 1899.

If you look at the bottom right side of the hymnal you will find the tune name highlighted in all caps, then a string of numbers. In this particular hymn, 10.10.10.10.10.10. These numbers refer to the number of syllables used per phrase.

Sometimes you will see either a CM or LM – these refer to Common meter and Long Meter. Now we are getting musically nerdy, but this is cool, common meter is 8.6.8.6., which means that any hymn or song in the same meter is interchangeable, which means that you can sing the words of Gilligan’s Island to the tune of Amazing Grace, and vice versa. Just in case you’re wondering! **Making a Joyful Noise, Alice**

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, Fire Station 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.

When it was too cold to play outside, the teachers brought the outside in by letting the children paint snow with watercolors. The children also had a grand time climbing high up in the sky on our wonderful “fear-conquering” climber.

Mrs. Bishop’s class enjoyed their annual Hot Chocolate Party, which was a true success if the children are wearing a bit of hot chocolate on their noses for the day.

Mrs. Souerdyke’s crew had such fun making and eating pancakes in honor of “P” week.

Mrs. McCann’s class practiced calling 911 in an emergency.

Registration for the 2020-2021 school year has begun. Our 3-day classes are already full! Be sure to tell all of your friends and family about our wonderful school. **Tara Williams – Welcome School Director**



Children's Ministry



Linda Reffert

On Sunday, March 1st and Wednesday, March 4th, One Great Hour of Sharing Fish banks will go home with all children in Sunday School and WOW. We will suspend our regular offering so that children may focus their giving on their fish banks. We'll collect the fish banks during the

Palm Processional on Palm Sunday Worship.

Families who miss this worship are invited to drop off their fish banks on Easter Sunday or anytime in the first half of April. Why do we place importance on One Great Hour fish banks? In a world of disaster, hunger, and oppression, millions of children and adults 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. Allowing and encouraging our children to help provide life and hope to the needy through their contributions of change and dollar bills reinforces a great life and faith lesson.

I don't know that this newsletter will reach you before our March Family Movie Night on Sunday, March 1st at 5 PM, but just in case.... We will be gathering for a kid-friendly dinner and then watch the classic Disney movie 101 Dalmatians in Fellowship Hall. Crafts will follow for those who are interested. The whole evening is free and open to all. I want to thank Mike & Sue Tabler, George Sayles and Mitch & Dawn Matthews for volunteering to help with this evening.

If you are an adult who didn't get signed up for the Thursday Evening Lenten Dinner and Study this year, but you'd like to participate even one or two of the

evenings, please email me or call me at church and we will find a place for you. I was so excited to see how fast our groups filled up this year and to have the need for an additional set of leaders!

During our WOW timeframe on Wednesday, March 25th, Pastor Mike, Liane Kirmis and I (with other helpers TBD) will host a Communion Workshop for our Kindergartners through 6th graders. We will start with dinner at 5:30 and then move through a series of rotations where children will learn more (in age appropriate groupings) about The Last Supper and how and why we celebrate communion here in our church. In one rotation, the kids will help Liane with mixing and baking our unique recipe of communion bread which will be served at 7 PM in the Sanctuary, to close out the workshop. Parents and Choir members are especially invited to share communion with us, but ALL are welcome at the Table!

Our last WOW for the school year will be on Wednesday, April 1st. This evening will be extra special because it will also be our 6th grade graduation. There will be a brief ceremony toward the end of dinner and we will take lots of pictures and then the 6th graders will be welcomed by the youth of our church into Illuminate Youth Group. Parents and grandparents of 6th graders are invited to attend this special evening but please RSVP to me by email, call or text, no later than Sunday, March 29th.

Third through 6th graders and their friends are invited to a Friday Fun Night on April 3rd from 6 PM to 9 PM. We'll share a pizza dinner and play lots of games (yes, including GaGa Ball) but also do a fun Bible Study and Mission project. I order the pizza and buy prizes for some of the games, so RSVP'ing is very important, so I can be fiscally responsible but not leave anyone out.

Our annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held at the end of Easter brunch between worship services. I would really appreciate donations of wrapped candy to be given out at the Hunt. I'll put out a basket for donations in late March or they can be dropped off in my office.



Youth Fellowship (YF) News



“Be strong and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!” Psalm 27:14

There are so many great scriptures about your heart in relationships.

This one about waiting can be pretty tough. We find it hard to wait now that we have high speed Wi-Fi, fast cars, fast food, fast everything. But God’s will is not rushed, prayers aren’t answered in a millisecond and aren’t always answered in exactly the way we want. So the verse saying take courage and be strong can also be, have a strong heart, full of courage, love and trust. How do we build that connection? Prayer, meditation and some quiet time. No rush, peace. Give it a try.

Many thanks to everyone who attended the congregational luncheon for their generous support of the youth and to the youth for their hard work and delicious food. Baked potato bar is one of our favorites and we hope you all enjoyed it as much as we did.



I’m so excited, we are working hard and making great progress for Youth Sunday except for the date. We hope to hear from all the youth very soon so we can finalize the date. Band, cheer, soccer and prom are only a few of the things happening and we have very involved kiddos so it’s difficult. We really want to pick a date so all of the youth can participate.

Even with all the activities we were able to have a fun game night with a new game of Live Clue. It was crazy and fun and there are some pictures included



here. To play you have to have a victim and a weapon so the rat from my office and an orange ball cap filled those parts. We hope next time more people will be able to attend. Also, if you have any small flashlights or pen lights sitting around at home, we could use a few extra.

We have dates now for both the Junior and Senior High summer mission trips. I am including the dates below to help you get them on your calendar not only for the youth and adult volunteers who will be attending but also for our church family to keep us in your prayers. It really means so much to know that you all are praying for us as we travel and work.

As we enter Lent I hope we all take to heart Pastor Mike’s sermon message from February 22nd. Instead of assuming that we are broken and in need of fixing we take time to relax, pray and open ourselves to the Spirit’s leading.



Be a Blessing, Shelli

March Youth Activities

Mar 1	Family Movie Night 5pm - 101 Dalmatians
Mar 8	YAS 4:30 Serve at Open Door Mission
Mar 18	No Illuminate/WOW
Mar 29	5th Sunday - Youth Liturgist & Usher

MISSION TRIPS

June 12-14	Jr Hi Trip to Camp Calvin Crest
July 12-19	Sr Hi Trip to the Stewpot in Dallas



~ March 2020 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Pantry Sunday 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service 11:30a Deacons Mtg (VVR) 5p Family Movie Night	2 1p Women's Bible Study (CR) 1:15p Heritage Ridge 2p Harmony Court	3 9a BWC Ticket Return (VVR) 10:30a Staff Meeting 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	4 5:30p WOW/Illuminate 7p Choir Rehearsal	5 6p Lenten Dinner 7p Troop 467	6 1p Jeanette McLaughlin Memorial Service/ Reception	7 11a Grace Wilson Memorial Service/ Luncheon
8 Undie Sunday 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service 11:30a Membership Meeting (VVR) 11:30a Mission Meeting (CR) 4:30p Youth Active Service/ ODM 6:30p Boy Scout Committee Meeting (VVR)	9 10:30a PEO (FHVVVR)	10 5:30p Christian Education Mtg (L) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	11 9a P.E.O. (VVR) 5:30p WOW/Illuminate 6p Building & Grounds Mtg (CR) 6p Finance Mtg (Admin Ofc) 7p Choir Rehearsal	12 6p Lenten Dinner 7p PW Bible Study (Church) 7p Troop 467 7:30p Worship Mtg (CR)	13	14
15 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service 11:30a Fellowship Mtg (VVR)	16 1p Women's Bible Study (CR)	17 St. Patrick's Day 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	18 7p Choir Rehearsal	19 11:30a Ladies Lunch (Romeos) 6p Lenten Dinner 7p Troop 467	20	21
22 Next Sunday Panty Sunday 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service	23	24 10a P.E.O. (VVR) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	25 12p Newsletter Articles Due 5:30p WOW/Illuminate 7p Choir Rehearsal	26 7p Session (VVR) 7p Troop 467 7p Troop 499 Committee Meeting (CR)	27	28 4:30p Spaghetti Dinner
29 9a Sunday School 10:30a Worship Service	30 1p Women's Bible Study (CR)	31 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal 7p Troop 499 Committee Mtg (VVR)	Notes:			



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March Birthdays:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 2 Ken Trinkle | 16 Dirk Lindner |
| 3 Jean Martin | 17 Joy Hartranft |
| 3 Jack Simmons | 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 Kelsi Smith |

