

Hilltop Highlights

A Monthly Publication of First Presbyterian Church

Mission Living

“One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:28-31)

This passage from Mark is the foundation for Mission. With these three great commandments, Jesus instructs in how we should live with God and with ourselves and with each other. It all comes down to love. Loving God by loving ourselves and loving our neighbor. Immediately following this passage, Jesus will tell the parable of the Good Samaritan so we can see exactly who our neighbor is. Mission is nothing more than loving God by loving our neighbor. When we as Christians engage in Mission, we go out into the world and bring the Gospel message to our neighbors by how we live and by how we care for them. Sometimes mission may take us to places we would rather not be and to people we would rather not associate with. But that’s what loving God requires of us. Going and doing for others in ways we may not always like. Going and doing for the least and the most vulnerable in our world.

In these days of COVID-19, our world seems to be shrinking in on us. Many of us are stuck at home with no place to go and nothing to do. That can be a very frightening and boring and maddening place to be. We would prefer to just go about doing the business of our lives and going where we feel like going whenever the mood strikes us. And it’s easy to resent the constraints that are placed on us. And it’s easy to resent the least and the most vulnerable among us that require us to take on these drastic restrictions on our life. But let me rephrase those sentiments for you.

Loving God means loving our neighbor. Sometimes the work of loving our neighbor requires us to do things and to change our lives to protect and preserve those who are most vulnerable. The work of love is not easy. It takes patience and trust and respect.

What if you were to look at these days of restriction and change as another way we go about doing mission? What if we looked at being homebound as a way we can love our neighbor and love God? Yes, it means changing how we live for right now. Yes, it means foregoing doing things we enjoy. It even means working a little harder to score some much needed toilet paper! But love is like that sometimes.



How about we look at these days of COVID-19 as just one more way we show God how much we love him by how we love and care for those who are most at risk of illness among us? As for the icing on the cake, you don’t need to go anywhere, it won’t cost you any money and you can be in mission while you sit on the couch watching your favorite TV show. Does it get any better than that? So take this time of change and disruption as your chance to love your neighbor.

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 and recovering at home
- ◆ Pray for all those affected by the Covid-19 virus

Financial Information

	<u>February</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Income	\$45,535.30	\$105,050.18
Expenses	<u>\$26,335.33</u>	<u>\$67,357.32</u>
Difference	\$19,199.97	\$37,692.86

- ◆ this income includes \$19,000.00 from Foundation and \$4,700.00 from Welcome School for Custodial Services



Happenings

Holy Week 2020

All services will be broadcast Facebook Live

April 9th- Our Maundy Thursday Worship Service will start at 7:00pm

April 10th Good Friday: Worship Service at Noon

April 12th Easter Sunday: Worship Service will be at 10:30am

Church Office will be closed on Monday, April 13th

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

12:00 Noon (**Facebook Live**)

April 10, 2020

*Organ Meditations on the
Seven Last Words of Jesus from the Cross*

The Good Friday service will be a service of organ meditations on the Seven Last Words of Christ at noon on Friday, April 10th at First Presbyterian Church. Composers include C. Hubert H. Parry, David N. Johnson, Dale Wood, Healey Willan, Dirk Lindner, Robert Powell, J.S. Bach, A.E. Floyd, Norman Gilbert and Johannes Brahms. You are welcome to join us online for a time of meditation and reflection on the death of Christ on the cross.



All in person events for April have been cancelled.

All services will be online on our Facebook page.

If there are any changes we will inform you by email.





Lawn Mowing and Flower Teams

It's time to start thinking about mowing team sign ups for the 2020 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 12th, 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."

Please just send an email if you wish to participate.

Join us for **Ladies' Lunch**. **Cancelled for April**. We may meet on the **Third Thursday** of each month at **11:30am**. In May we may meet on the 21st at John's Grecian Delight. Please call or email **Bev Snowden** if you plan on attending **402-291-7653** or **evsnowden2017@gmail.com**.



Annual Church Garage Sale

Saturday, April 25th (8am to 1pm)

Rescheduled date is yet to be determined



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.



Our Synod will decide by mid June whether or not to host Synod School this summer. If it is cancelled any tuition paid will be 100% refunded.



Financial Support of our Church

During this time of crisis it is crucial that you continue your financial support of our church. Here are the ways you can do that:

- ☺ Using your banks bill pay to send a donation using your envelope # in the account number field. If you do not have an envelope number last name is just fine. If you need assistance just call the church office and we will be happy to help.
- ☺ US Mail—Our address is 1220 Bellevue Blvd. South, Bellevue, NE 68005
- ☺ Stopping by the church office to drop off your offering during working hours. Our hours are Monday through Thursday 8:30a to 3:00pm
- ☺ We understand that during these difficult times it may not be possible to fulfill your pledge commitment. If this is the case please let us know so we can make adjustments.

With everyone being pretty much confined in their home we thought it would be a good idea to give you a little something to keep busy:

Beginner Level

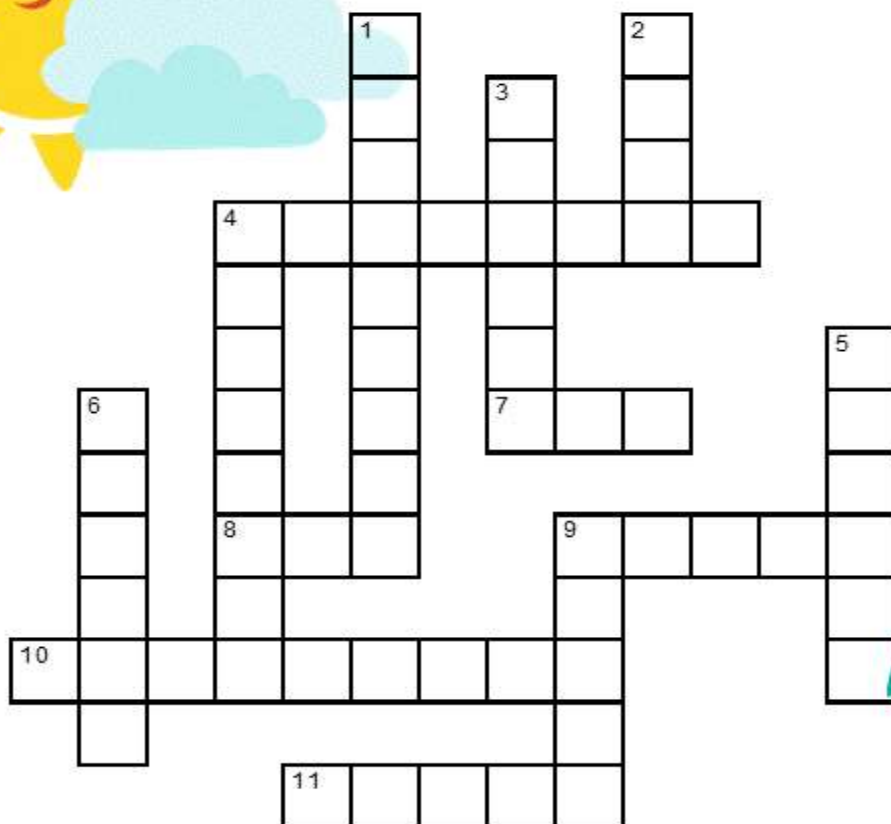
	6	3			7			8
						5	3	
	7	9		1	5		6	
			8	5			4	1
		6	1	4	2	7		
1	5			7	9			
	2		5	9		3	7	
	3	7						
4			7			2	8	

Medium Level

	9	3	1		5	6	4	
7								5
5		1	2		9	3		7
2								3
	3	6	9		7	5	2	
9								1
3		2	4		8	1		9
6								4
	4	7	3		2	8	5	



Easter Crossword



ACROSS

- 4. You might do this to eggs for Easter
- 7. A hen makes this
- 8. Used to color eggs
- 9. The hen's baby
- 10. Colorful candy you might find in an Easter basket
- 11. Peter Cottontail is one

DOWN

- 1. Eggs might be made from this
- 2. Look for eggs
- 3. Easter Day event
- 4. Yellow or white spring flower that grows from a bulb
- 5. What the Easter Bunny brings
- 6. A pretty hat worn on Easter
- 9. Don't eat too much of this or you might get a belly ache



BIBLE WORD SEARCH!

BASIC WORDS OF THE BIBLE

G	E	N	T	I	L	E	B	I	B	L	E	D
O	B	A	A	B	R	T	J	E	M	D	I	I
D	P	I	I	E	S	I	M	N	I	P	B	N
T	E	M	P	T	A	T	I	O	N	J	A	H
H	R	P	S	H	L	H	R	P	I	E	P	O
E	S	R	A	L	V	E	A	N	S	R	T	L
F	E	A	C	E	A	H	C	A	T	U	I	Y
A	C	Y	R	H	T	O	L	Z	R	S	Z	S
T	U	E	I	E	I	L	E	A	Y	A	E	P
H	T	I	F	M	O	Y	J	R	H	L	N	I
E	E	S	I	N	N	A	J	E	W	E	H	R
R	W	E	C	L	F	A	I	T	H	M	L	I
B	S	J	E	S	U	S	C	H	R	I	S	T

JESUS CHRIST
SALVATION
JEW
GENTILE
HOLY SPIRIT
GOD THE FATHER
PERSECUTE

PRAY
TITHE
MINISTRY
BIBLE
HOLY
SACRIFICE
FAITH

MIRACLE
NAZARETH
BETHLEHEM
JERUSALEM
BAPTIZE
TEMPTATION
SIN



DEBT PAY-OFF CAMPAIGN UPDATE

As of March 23, 2020

FPC loan balance is down to \$100,042. The Building Fund contains only \$29,110 which will pay the monthly payments only for the next 4 months---through July 2020. At that time, the balance will still 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 mail in your contributions or drop them by the office. 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

Making A Joyful Noise

This week the choir would have been singing a piece called “If My People” by Joseph Martin. I brought a copy home so that I could share the text with you. (after looking at the scripture reference 2 Chronicles 7:14, I went and looked up that scripture and the context it was written in. This happened after the Lord appeared to Solomon after he had finished building the temple of the Lord.)

Vs. 13 says *“when I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land”*.



I am not suggesting in any way that the Covid-19 virus was sent to us by God. Our God is a loving God, and I know that he will heal our land. But folks, since we have a lot of time right now, let’s all do this – pray that he will heal our land.

I chose this before any word of Covid-19 was out, but I find it is so timely. I can’t wait until we are together and the choir can sing this for you.

Humbly praying,
Alice



Children's Ministry



Linda Reffert

Gosh, this is weird! I usually write my newsletter articles with a mix of thank you's and activities that are coming up. I can still talk to you about VBS, but most activities that were coming sooner on the calendar were cancelled, and there is just so much that's still unknown about when life will go back to usual.

I hope that you will take the time to read about some of our darling 6th graders on page 10. On April 1st, we should have had our last WOW with a 6th grade graduation ceremony. And then when the ceremony ended, Shelli and the youth would have transitioned the 6th graders into Illuminate Youth Group. That transition will happen at the start of next fall. But I wanted to take this opportunity to shine some light on our wonderful 6th graders. Three of our 6th graders were comfortable with sharing with all of you, through the newsletter, in place of me sharing this at a graduation. Kids who took home One Great Hour of Sharing fish banks should go ahead and hold on to them for now (you can keep putting money in them). Further information will be coming.

I want to thank our Lenten Group Leaders and Readers. Readers were: Sharon Elliott, Mary Hughey, Rick Holbert, Jack Syphers, Dick Brown, Sue Tabler, Rick & Liane Kirmis. And our Group Leaders were: Mike & Sharon Elliott, Becky Berg, John & Shelli Dart, Tom & Laura Miller, Rick & Marsha Holbert, John & Betty Kieran. Thanks to everyone who participated during the short time we were able to meet. We had 58 people registered for our Thursday evening dinners and discussions and that was wonderful! Thanks also, to committee members who stepped up to provide food, setup and clean up when they were involved in hosting a dinner.

I also want to thank our CE members, who lovingly created Lenten prayer stations that most of you have not been able to share, because of the church building being closed. Most of the prayer stations will be left up until after we resume normal activities and everyone has had the chance to benefit from them. Thanks go out to: Sue Tabler, Shelli Dart, Laura Miller, Nancy Shultz, Becca Griffin and Nora Boyd.

I am proceeding as if we will be able to host VBS on July 20th. A number of us are working on decorations already. Landy & Jean Jacobson, Gary Sands and Cathy Talmadge are all harnessing their creativity. I could sure use more help, even if you don't have an ounce of creativity! The main things I need right now, that you could easily do at home are boxes of many sizes (think Amazon order and up) gift-wrapped in aluminum foil. I have both foil and boxes in my office if you need either one of those. I also need lots of gears cut out of colored construction paper. I have patterns in my office or you can download your own off Pinterest or Google Images. Emily, Morgan & Eli Fenster were the first ones to stop by church to pick up supplies but I could use at least 10 more people working on these.

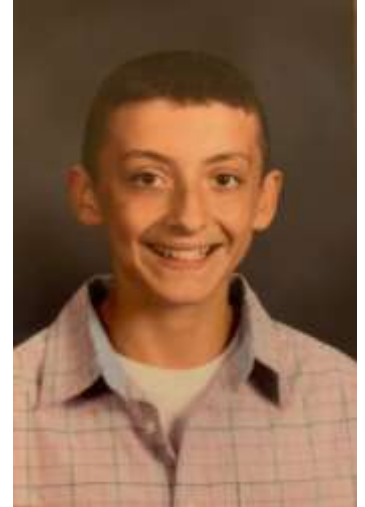
Getting back to thank you's, I want to thank Sheila Sloniker, one of our wonderful Nursery staff members, for giving up a morning to come in to sanitize every toy the kids play with. She knows what gets hugged, drug around, drooled on, etc. and she cleaned them thoroughly. And I want to thank Pastor Mike for taking home a big bag full of blankets and costumes to run through the washing machine. I took a bag full of dolls and stuffed animals and cushions home, too. Add to that Custodian Sue Shook disinfecting every solid surface and our Nursery is gonna be cleaner than it's been in years, when we finally get to open back up!



Children's Ministry

6th Grade Graduates

Elijah William Fenster is the son of Matthew & Emily (and grandson of Don & Wendy). Eli is a student at Wake Robin Elementary and next year he will attend Logan Fontenelle Middle School. Eli's hobbies are sports, particularly BJSa football (he's a quarterback) and Junior Cougars baseball. Eli also likes hanging out with friends when he can and playing Madden 20 on his Xbox One. Eli's favorite activities in the Children's program have been playing GaGa ball and WOW cookouts. Eli's favorite subject at school is Social Studies and his favorite food is steak with mashed potatoes. Eli's favorite Bible verse is Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."



Zachary Keaton is the son of Audie & Lori (and grandson of LeAnn Jobes). Zach attends Johnson Crossing Academic Center and next year he will go to Fremont Middle School. Zach's favorite things to do in his free time are to play with his 2 new puppies, play basketball and video games. Zach's favorite activities in our Children's program have been playing GaGa ball and singing The Books of the Bible song. His favorite subject at school is Social Studies and his favorite food is steak. Zach's favorite verse is Philippians 4:13. Zach and Eli have been close friends for much of their lives and as I read their favorites (even though they were far apart when they completed these question) their answers reflected how similar their thinking is.

Abby Reilly is the daughter of Tim & Cindy. She currently attends Rumsey Station Elementary and next year she will attend LaVista Middle School. Abby's favorite things to do in her free time are Music, Baking/Cooking and Volleyball, but boy, was it hard for her to narrow it down to just three! Abby's favorite activities in our Children's Program have been VBS and having a church grandma (thank you Bev Snowden!). Abby's favorite subject in school is Math and her favorite food is sushi. Abby's favorite Bible story is Matthew 19:14. Do you know that off the top of your head? It's the story of Jesus welcoming the little children. Abby is a child who has a heart for younger children and can often be found helping small children when they are stuck or confused or needing guidance.



Youth Fellowship (YF) News



“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though it’s waters roar and

foam and the mountains quake with their surging. ”
Psalm 46:1-3

This scripture is actually my first “memory verse” I learned in my 20s. Another is Philippians 4:6 “Be anxious for nothing, but in all things by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

In our last Sunday school together we talked about social distancing, cancelling school and all of the precautions we are told to start taking. We talked honestly about how some of us were afraid and some of us were angry and some a combination of both. I think we all find ourselves not really knowing what to feel.

At that time we thought we’d see each other in a week but now we are limited to 10 people in a gathering so all things are postponed including Youth Sunday and all activities probably for the entire month of April. The youth have worked hard and have a great worship service for you. We look forward when we can do this because it will mean we are all back to worshipping in one space.

These are different times and people don’t know what to make of the news reports, the call to stay home, the crazy run on toilet paper and hand sanitizer. Some people are reacting with fear and greed and others are responding as God hopes we respond by taking care of our neighbors. The church has come together to see what people need. If you need something please

call the church.

Sunday the 22nd of March was our first service limited to 10 people. We had music, a lay leader, Pastor Mike and our IT folks physically in the building but we were so blessed to have so many join us on FB Live. As I watched the numbers jump higher and higher I was brought to tears thinking of how blessed we are to still be able to worship together.

News reports can lead to fear but remember how many times in the Bible “Do not be afraid” or “Fear not” appears. Be cautious, be careful but don’t live overtaken by fear, God is our refuge. Find a verse that speaks to you and post it on your mirror, refrigerator or front door. This is a perfect time for us all to find a memory verse. It’s so helpful when we are feeling frightened to have scripture in our heads to repeat and find our calm and our hope.

I hope we can find other creative ways to be together and support each other. Call a church friend, send a card, send an e-mail or text.

Last time I mentioned Pastor Mike’s sermon message at the beginning of Lent, a call to take time to relax, pray and open ourselves to the Spirit’s leading. Who knew a lot of us would have an abundance of time to take this to heart and put it into action.

Be a Blessing, Shelli

APRIL SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Get some fresh air, Learn how to cook, Help clean the house, Write notes to friends, Do something crafty, Read a book, Practice kindness, Facetime someone

MISSION TRIPS - Plans are currently a go for both trips

June 12-14 Jr Hi Trip to Camp Calvin Crest

July 12-19 Sr Hi Trip to the Stewpot in Dallas



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Mai l i n g A d d r e s s L i n e 1
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M a i l i n g A d d r e s s L i n e 5

April Birthdays:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Carter Dawson | 22 Taylor Bloom |
| 1 Bev Snowden | 22 Gabbie Emsick |
| 1 Eliza Boyd | 23 Kim O’Riordan |
| 2 Alice Renner | 25 Linda Hilfiker |
| 3 Sylvia Pelzer | 25 Josh Blazek |
| 3 Audie Keaton | 26 Megan Warren |
| 6 Deb Hudson | 27 Carolyn Hess |
| 14 Jonathan Highbargin | 27 Mary Nelson |
| 15 Retha Dowding | 28 LeAnn Jobses |
| 17 Madison Braun | 28 Eoin Healy |
| 17 Lori Keaton | 28 Cindy Reilly |
| 18 Marcie deZafra | 30 Scott Reffert |
| 21 Eric Van Sky | |

