

# Hilltop Highlights

A Monthly Publication of First Presbyterian Church

## A Dumb Question

*“Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.” Jesus said to him, “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.” (John 5:2-9)*

Without trying to sound irreverent, when Jesus asks a sick man lying next to a pool that was noted for being a place of healing, “Do you want to be made well?” it has got to be one of the dumber questions that we find in Scripture. Do you agree? After all, it seems pretty obvious to me, as John tells the story, exactly what the sick man wanted, doesn’t it? Maybe Jesus just wanted to hear from his own mouth what he saw his need to be? We could think of a lot of different reasons for why Jesus asks a pretty dumb question. Then again, maybe, just maybe, Jesus wants us to know that there is no such thing as a dumb question! Especially when it comes to growing more deeply in our faith.

In last week’s sermon, we talked about how one place that we encounter Jesus is by reading and studying Scripture. And, like the good Presbyterians that we are, we believe that we are better able to understand and apply Scripture when we study in a group rather than alone.

Now, I don’t know about you, but for me, the best way to learn is by asking questions. If you have ever participated in Bible study with me you will notice that I like to ask a lot of questions. And answer them too! When it comes to learning about God, there are no dumb questions. Ever. That is how we teach and learn and discover about how God is working in our lives and in the world. When we study Scripture, there are no dumb questions.



I hope that you will take advantage of all of the extra time that we have on our hands by engaging in some good Bible study with a friend or family member. And remember, if Jesus can ask a sick man if he wants to be healed, then the sky is the limit about what you can ask!

Starting Tuesday, May 5th at 12:30pm, Linda & I will be leading a Bible Study on Paul’s letter to the Philippians. Given the current situation, we will have to meet via Zoom for the time being. This is an easy format to use and very user friendly. We look forward to seeing you there.

Yours in Christ,  
Mike



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### Staff

Rev. Dr. Michael G. Elliott (Pastor)-pastor@bellevuefpc.org  
M, Tu, W, Th 8:30 am to 3:00 pm

June Kouba (Church Administrator/Treasurer)-admin@bellevuefpc.org  
M, Tu, W, Th 8:30 am to 3:00 pm

Linda Reffert (Children's Ministry Director)-lkreffert@aol.com  
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Shelli Dart (Youth Ministry Director)-youthdirector@bellevuefpc.org  
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Dirk Lindner (Organist)-dirk16@cox.net

Eric Van Sky (Financial Secretary)-eric.vansky@yahoo.com



### 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
- ◆ Pray for all those affected by the Covid-19 virus

### Financial Information

|            | <u>March</u>       | <u>YTD</u>          |
|------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Income     | \$14,877.44        | \$119,997.36        |
| Expenses   | <u>\$35,079.94</u> | <u>\$102,437.26</u> |
| Difference | <\$20,202.50       | \$17,560.10         |



All in person events for May have been cancelled.

All services will be online on our Facebook page.

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

Join us for **Ladies' Lunch**. **Cancelled for May**. We normally meet on the **Third Thursday** of each month at **11:30am**. Please call or email **Bev Snowden** if you have any questions **402-291-7653** or **evsnowden2017@gmail.com**.



## Annual Church Garage Sale Rescheduled date is yet to be determined

The grounds clean up crew of Landy Jacobson, Ryan Crick and Tom Blazek were here early in April to do some clean up of the church property. Thank you for all your hard work and dedication.



Most of you may not know Sue Shook. She is our custodian and has been for 6 years. Sue has always worked very hard in trying to keep our church clean working part time. Sue has been taking extra steps and is very diligent in making sure every surface has been completely disinfected. She is also cleaning carpets and steam cleaning all the chairs in Fellowship Hall. She definitely has gone the extra mile and continues to disinfect the church on a weekly, sometimes daily basis depending on the number of people that come in. If you ever get a chance to meet her or see her, please take a moment to thank her for her hard work.



## 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.

### DEBT PAY-OFF CAMPAIGN UPDATE As of April 20, 2020

Some Good News-FPC loan balance is now under \$100,000. It currently stands at \$93,097. However, the Debt Pay-Off account contains only \$24,054 which will pay the monthly payments only for the next 3 months—through July 2020 when the balance will still be about \$75,000.

Please continue with your contributions. If you plan to make a significant end of year payment, please consider making it sooner rather than later so we can continue making the required monthly payments through December 2020.

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

**Newsletter:** Effective August of this year we will no longer be mailing the Newsletter. We will continue to email the Newsletter to everyone on file with an email address. We do have approximately 20 people that do not have an email address that we will continue to mail the monthly newsletter to. Not mailing the newsletters will save the church approximately \$1700.00 a year. We will continue to also post the Newsletter on our Website [www.bellevuefpc.org](http://www.bellevuefpc.org).



## Bakersplus.com

We just received the **First Quarter** of 2020 rebate from Bakers for **\$184.54** this is wonderful and includes **47** 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.

## 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.

## The Pentecost Offering Helps Our Youth Begin Life with A Strong Start

Each year on Pentecost Sunday, we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birthday of the church. The Holy Spirit remains with us still, connecting us with *the church of the past*, continuing to inspire *the church of today*, and pointing us to *the church of the future*. Each year, this celebration is marked by receiving the Pentecost Offering which nurtures the faith of those who are the church to come; children, youth, and young adults.

Psalm 71 testifies that a foundation of faith established during childhood helps ensure lifelong faith and service. The patterns and lessons established during these formative years continue to bear fruit throughout a person's life. By giving to the Pentecost Offering, your congregation participates in helping our children, youth, and young adults grow up to proclaim with the Psalmist, "O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds."

Since the Pentecost Offering started in 1998, Presbyterians have raised more than \$15 million for ministries that benefit younger members of God's family. We believe we are called to do even more; to support and care for young people as they build a strong foundation of faith. Won't you join in your support? If we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

**Because we are not meeting in church please send in your donations to the church office and designated Pentecost Offering in the memo portion of your check,**



## Children's Ministry



Linda Reffert

So, have you learned to Zoom yet? Do you love it or hate it or something in between? Most of the time I really enjoy it! It's not as good as being together in person, but it beats emails and phone calls by a long way to me. And I've sure seen it perk people up who are living alone.

I ask about Zoom because a lot of my job and volunteer activities have moved to Zoom lately. I do two Zoom Sunday school classes each Sunday morning and I got all teary when I saw 20 darling smiling faces on my screen that first Sunday morning. It was just wonderful! I don't know about you, but I am never on the forefront of using new technology. My family could list off all the times I balked as long as I could. But I am so grateful for the people who created Zoom and as an alternative to not seeing our precious kids for a month or months, I had to jump. We keep finding new ways to use Zoom with relatives and here at church for meetings and studies and in my presbytery duties too. I would like to think I will be quicker to jump on new technology as it becomes available in the future. We shall see.

Shelli and I are working together to figure out how to continue the church grandparent program, when we can't bring the generations together in person and do the blessing and pictures. She's good at thinking outside the box, so I'm sure we will get it figured out. Details will be coming out in the next week or two, but if you are not already involved, and you want to be – either as having church grandparents assigned to your children OR you want to become a church grandparent, please let Shelli or I know.

Thanks go out to Sharon Elliott, the Reilly family and Marty Davis for volunteering to help with VBS decorations. Sharon and the Reilly's have been doing some cutting and coloring and Marty has been

wrapping boxes. Thanks too, to Denise Seaman and Joyce Wells who dropped off boxes. Now that I have wrapped boxes myself, I know that it's not nearly as easy as I thought it would be. My apologies go out to all of you who have found this out the hard way. That said, I still have lots of boxes (and aluminum foil and tape) available for anyone who is willing to wrap. I will even bring them out to your trunk if you call the church and let me know you are coming! And if you want advice about how best to go about wrapping the boxes, I suggest you ask June Kouba. She is the Wrapping Queen and has already wrapped 26 boxes, all by herself!

I'm also on the lookout for things run by gears and levers, to borrow for VBS. If you have a lightweight exercise bike you would consider loaning us for the week of VBS, please let me know. And if you have anything else, especially things that are run by gears and levers that the kids could try out for themselves, please let me know. I will honor your request, if you want your item(s) to be for kids to look at only, though too. I'd love to be able to borrow a plastic skeleton too. We are going to talk about the wonder of the human body and how God created all our pieces and parts to work together to do amazing things.

VBS is planned for July 20 through the 24<sup>th</sup> and registration should open by mid-May. If you can help that week for a day or two or the whole week, please let me know. There are positions that are hands on, directly working with kids, but also positions that are more behind the scenes or in the Kitchen. The sooner you let me know how you'd like to help the more choices you will have!

Please keep sending in pictures of your God Sightings to June at [admin@bellevuefpc.org](mailto:admin@bellevuefpc.org). We know that God is at work in the world and this is such a great time to share beautiful examples of His creation.



## Youth Fellowship (YF) News



*"So He said, 'Go forth and stand on the mountain before the Lord.' And behold, the Lord was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the*

*rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing." 1 Kings 19:11-12*

This is the story of Elijah in exile in Horeb. He's listening for God's voice and direction. Many times we think of God's voice as a direct, strong, loud voice but here Elijah hears God in a gentle blowing. There are a number of stories of hearing God once the person takes time to be still.

With our current situation of staying at home and out of big groups we have a great opportunity to add a bit of quiet in our lives and practice more active listening for God to speak in our hearts. We can add a specific devotion time, a time to read our Bibles or a time to just be silent. This can help us focus more on God and less on the news media and the fear that can grow and distract us from all the great things going on in our lives. YouVersion has some inspirational devotionals, you can type in a topic like Hope, Joy, Peace and find devotionals specifically for those topics. I just finished Quarantine Youth that was written just for young people. I hope you check these out and add a little time each day for some positive voices to speak to your hearts.

We have been doing our Youth Fellowship on Wednesdays via Zoom which has been a great opportunity to see each other and catch up. A lot of times we view technology as a distraction and

frustration but I am so glad we have this opportunity to meet together while we must



all stay apart. We did have a picnic at church with everyone bringing their own dinner and I picked up some Dilly Bars. Ice cream is always delightful and it was wonderful to see each other even though we had to stay in our own little spaces. I hope to do these picnics again soon. It was apparent how much we've all missed seeing each other.

While we all stay apart to keep each other safe I hope you find other ways to connect whether it's via Zoom, Facebook Live or a social distanced picnic and enjoy each other and this beautiful weather.

Looking forward to the time we can all be together!

Be a Blessing, Shelli



### MAY SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

**YouVersion Bible Studies, get out in nature, find some new music, find a relaxation video or meditation music. Post a scripture on your mirror. Start your day on a positive note.**

### 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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## May Birthdays

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Marilyn Routt    | 15 Clara Stilen     |
| 2 Morgan Braun     | 15 Susan Tamayo     |
| 2 Mason Braun      | 18 Austin Braun     |
| 2 Matthew Clark    | 19 Rachel Monico    |
| 4 Hattie Urwin     | 19 Margot Boyd      |
| 4 Gabrielle Keaton | 21 JoAnn Carpenter  |
| 5 Miles Monico     | 22 Nora Boyd        |
| 7 Brandon Van Sky  | 23 Carolyn Lowrance |
| 8 Deanna Freier    | 25 Bonnie Alexander |
| 8 Landy Jacobson   | 25 Fianna Glenn     |
| 11 Ryan Baruth     | 26 Sally Syphers    |
| 12 Lexie Ryks      | 27 Jaci Marks       |
| 13 Dave Hartranft  | 27 Bryan Kirmis     |
| 13 Barb Simmons    | 29 Mike Tabler      |

