

Hilltop Highlights

A Monthly Publication of First Presbyterian Church

Growing Pains

Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. (1 John 3:2)

As we enter the seventh, yes, I said the seventh month of life in times of COVID, it is more apparent than ever how ill prepared the world was to deal with this crisis and even more apparent how difficult it is to recover and try to find our new normal. I, for one, am getting tired. Are you? So how do we move forward? Or as the Apostle John would remind us, "Beloved, we are God's children now: what we will be has not yet been revealed."

John meant these words as words of hope for his audience. They are words of hope because they remind us that no matter what has happened up to this point, we were and are and always will be God's beloved children. I think that is something that we need to remember as we go forward in uncharted territory, not with fear but with audacious hope in the future God is calling us into.

Now for the bad news. Change and growth come at a price. And they are not always smooth and painless. Growing pains are a very real thing. Even and especially for us as a congregation. As I sit here and think back on our journey over the past months that is very apparent to me.

As we entered shut-down in March, we had many growing pains indeed. How to continue to worship as a congregation even as we were physically apart. How to stay in connected. How to keep communication open. How to stay aware of our needs and support each other. Our growing pains over these months have been painful at times.

I would like to tell you that we transitioned into the COVID world smoothly and efficiently and with grace, but that would not be the complete truth. We made mistakes. We took missteps. We fumbled and had some not so graceful moments. And yet, we have, by God's grace, carried on and moved forward. These months have made it very clear where our weaknesses are and how hard it is to learn to be a congregation in new ways. And we are learning and growing. My prayer is that you remember that it is God's grace and mercy and forgiveness that has made us what we are and the sharing of that mercy and grace and forgiveness that will allow us to become what God has in store for us.



Now we enter a new phase of congregational life where we more fully come back together face to face. As we restart our church programs and activities as safely and as faithfully as we can, my hope in Christ is that you will hold your church leaders and fellow congregants in prayer as we go through our next phase of growing pains.

Indeed, we do not know what the future has in store for our beloved church, but the Good News is that whatever it is, as Christ is more fully revealed in us, it will be beautiful indeed.

Yours in Christ, Mike



Inside this issue:	
Keep in Prayer	2
Financials	2
Happenings	3
Making a Joyful Noise	4
Stewardship	5
Welcome School	6
Children's Ministry	7
Youth Ministry	8
Calendar	9
Birthdays	10

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We Keep in Our Prayers

- ◆ All of our folks who are unable to leave their homes
- ◆ All those affected by the Covid-19 virus
- ◆ Margaret Jackson for continued healing
- ◆ Joan Rousseau for continued healing
- ◆ Sanborn's for continued healing from Covid
- ◆ John & Cherie Wallace for peace and healing

Financial Information

	August	<u>YTD</u>
Income*	\$16,845.79	\$291,642.66
Expenses	<u>\$22,932.83</u>	<u>\$221,622.34</u>
Difference	< \$6,087.04	\$70,020.32



All services will be **in person and online on our Facebook page**. All in person events other than worship for October have been cancelled unless approved by Session. **If there are any changes we will inform you by email.**

Trunk or Treat

Trick or Treat Around the Church is an event we have done the last few years that quickly became one of my very favorite events of the year. I'm not big on Halloween, but I love kids and their excitement about the holiday. I love showing off the friendly and caring people of our church, and the building itself. Of course this year, we can't possibly invite the city of Bellevue into our building. But members of Christian Education and some from Membership committee were talking and we came up with an alternative.



On **Wednesday, October 21st from 5:30 to 6:30 PM**, we plan to host a Trunk or Treat out in the Welcome School side of the parking lot. See more details in Children's Ministry article.



Get out your rake, get out your gloves, shovels and clippers and join us on Saturday, November 7th for a fall clean-up.

We will begin with coffee and donuts at 10:00am and will follow with cleaning up our church grounds shortly after. Please join us for a fun morning of fellowship and an opportunity to prepare our building for the upcoming fall and winter seasons.

Thank You

A special thanks to Pastor Mike and everyone for all the prayers, many phone calls and cards after my cataract surgery which became more complicated than anticipated. I really appreciate all of your thoughts and prayers. **Flossie Flora**



We can't begin to tell you how much we appreciate (and feel) the concern, prayers and love that our church family has shown us as we have gone through a positive Covid diagnosis. All the super good meals have been such a blessing to us. Thank you to all!

David and Elaine Sanborn



Making a Joyful Noise!

Last week I was tagged by someone on Facebook with this hymn parody. Of course, I immediately thought of John and Shelli Dart, and Rick and Bryan Kirmis. You sing it to the words of “All Creatures of our God and King”, or the official tune name Lasst Uns Erfreuen by Zack Stachowski.

Credits go to John H. Taylor, Narelle Zwar, and Va’alota Solfec. The tune refers to the Episcopalian Mass, but I think it also refers to the problems all of our sound technicians have during the live-streaming challenge of Facetime Church.

So to John and Shelli, Bryan and Rick, We totally thank you.

SO QUICKLY HAS THIS WEEK FLOWN BY

So quickly has this week flown by! Set up the tripod, it is time for your weekly Sunday live-stream!

Hook up your I-phone or I- Pad, untangle ev’ry wire you have.

Find that one thing that you’re missing, that one item you rely on, you re-ly on.

Three minutes now until we start, this is the time the Wi-Fi stops.

Who’s the first-hand saint of broad –band? Up till this point it all worked fine.

This makes me lose me *&-\$ mind! Wait, it works, no “dis-con-nec-ted”.

This all make me a-po-plec-tic, a-po-plec-tic.

Now that the live-stream church is done, sit back, relax, en-joy the sun.

All is posted, stream’s been hosted.

Think of the ser-vice you pro-vide: You bring church to those stuck in-side.

Though the task is not your go-to, we give thanks for all you go through, all that you-do.

Thanks, John, Shelli, Bryan and Rick!

From Alice, and the whole First Presbyterian Family!

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.



2021 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN IS ONGOING

The 2021 Stewardship Campaign is here. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic we are conducting the campaign primarily by mail, email and Newsletter.

The Campaign letter was mailed to the congregation on September 22nd. The letter includes an estimate of the 2021 operating budget. Also included with the letter will be a pledge card and a self addressed stamped return envelope. The letter requests that the completed pledge card be mailed back to the office---or dropped off at the office NLT the last week in October.

Returned pledge cards will be kept under lock and key in the office until the Finance Secretary, Eric Van Sky, records the information. The Stewardship Committee will keep the congregation and Session informed on the Campaign's progress/results.

A member of the Finance Committee discussed the estimated 2021 budget during the September 27th church service.

As always, we thank you for your generosity. Please direct any questions to either the Finance Secretary or to me.

Bob Jeffus-Chair, Stewardship Committee

DEBT PAY-OFF CAMPAIGN UPDATE

As of September 22, 2020

More Good News---FPC loan balance currently stands at \$63,409. The Debt Pay-Off account now contains \$24,648 which will pay the monthly payments for October thru January 2021. We will still need about \$35,000 to fully pay-off the loan.

Please continue with your contributions. If you plan to make a significant end of year payment, please consider making it sooner rather than later. And if we can pay-off the remaining debt in early 2021 we can save the church another \$1,000 to \$1,500, 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

Bakersplus.com

We just received the **Second Quarter of 2020** rebate from Bakers for **\$166.73** this is wonderful and includes **44** 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.



Coffee Fellowship



Rick & Marsha Holbert

News from Welcome School

News from Welcome School: School is back in full swing! The kids are having so much fun with their teachers and classmates. September has really gone by fast. Students are learning about friends, sharing, farms, dinosaurs, camping and much, much, more! I see painting, rolling, pouring and hammering! We were able to go to Gifford Farm this month. It's so great to learn all about the animals on the farm. In October, we look forward to a visit from our local Bellevue Fire Department; trucks and all!

Thank you and God bless,
Tara Williams
Director of Welcome School



Children's Ministry



Linda Reffert

Trick or Treat Around the Church is an event we have done the last few years that quickly became one of my very favorite events of the year. I'm not big on Halloween, but I love kids and their excitement about the holiday. I love showing off the friendly and caring people of our church, and the building itself.

Of course this year, we can't possibly invite the city of Bellevue into our building. But members of Christian Education and some from Membership committee were talking and we came up with an alternative.

On October 21st from 5:30 to 6:30 PM, we plan to host a Trunk or Treat out in the Welcome School side of the parking lot. We are looking for congregation members who will bring their car between 4:45 and 5:15. We will park them 6 feet apart, in a horseshoe shape. We will invite the families of children of our congregation and Welcome School to park in the upper parking lot and walk their kids down to trick or treat from car to car. Please bring wrapped candy or treats such as fruit snacks or pencils or trinkets, and your mask. We can provide gloves, trays and tongs to help you pass things out safely. You can decorate your trunk or not, wear a costume or not, as you prefer. If you'd rather set up a table outside, we can make that happen too. Normally, we put the word out in the community too, but with the lack of Halloween opportunities this year, we are afraid we might be swarmed and not able to control the crowd and keep everyone safe. Next year we will invite the community in again, but for this year, please help us keep it to our congregation and Welcome School.

We do have a snow date reserved, of October 28th, but that's only if snow covers the parking lot on the 21st. If it's just cold, we'll just bundle up and still host it on the 21st. Most events related to Halloween are cancelled this year and the kids will be so excited to be able to safely trick or treat here!

We opened the church nursery during worship, beginning on September 20th. Susan or Sheila meet each family at the door of the Nursery. They take each child's temperature before the child enters the room. Susan, Sheila and our 4 year olds wear masks.

Sunday School for ages 3 through 6th grade also began on September 20th. This is done over Zoom from 9:15 to 9:45 AM. If you have a child in that age range that didn't get signed up yet, please let me know. I can accommodate a few more.

Thanks go out to Mike Tabler, Jean Jacobson, Cathy Talmadge, Nancy Shultz, Carolyn Hess and George Sayles for agreeing to help in the Kitchen when we resume in-person WOW on Wednesday, October 7th. We needed more table parents, since we can't sit 8 to a table, as usual. Thanks to Megan Warren, Megan Highbargin, Kristen Krom, Mike Elliott, Liane Kirmis and Sue Tabler for agreeing to be table parents this year. It'll be a challenging year but we are so grateful we can host WOW. So if you are willing to sub as a table parent or cook, please send me an email or call the church.

I am so very grateful to Liane Kirmis for agreeing to be Children's Music Director this year. We had music last year, but I picked out most of it and coordinated it and realized how much that isn't my gift! It will be wonderful for the kids to be led by Liane. I would love to have some substitutes available for WOW, just in case. Finally, I want to say what an absolute delight the Mom's Zoom group has been. It meets on Thursday nights. If you didn't jump in this time, but you would be interested in participating sometime in the future, please let me know.

WOW students will be studying The Fruits of the Spirit first semester and singing related songs. How many of you can list off the fruits of the spirit without looking in your Bible? I really am curious and would love to hear from you. And if you do know them, I'd love to hear how you learned them. Was it through song?

Finally, I want to mention that it was delightful to present Bibles to our third graders this year on September 20th. Bibles were presented to Evie Highbargin, daughter of Lowell and Megan and Nicollette Warren, daughter of Patrick and Megan. This was the 35th year that 3rd grade Bibles were presented, using funds from the Virginia Puls Sones Memorial Fund. You may remember that Virginia was Becky Berg's mother. What a great memorial to her!



October Youth Fellowship (YF) News



“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”
Galatians 5:22-23

I love this verse and I need to be reminded of it often so I wanted to share it with you this month. I'm sure for all of us this 14 day quarantine that started in March seems like it's gone on forever so we are having a hard time being joyful and patient and fruitful at all. I heard the craziest thing this week in my Devotional - Any Thing Worth Doing Is Worth Doing Poorly. What does that even mean?? In the discussion it was really about our attempts at perfection and our desire to always do things the same way we've always done. If we only have 30 seconds to brush our teeth do it, it's better than nothing. If we don't have time for a shower, put on fresh clothes. The list of examples goes on.

Back in July I was stuck moping and sad that we couldn't go on our Mission trips this Summer. I was stuck in the thought it had to be what it's always been.



Jessica from West Hills talked about their Zoom Mission trip and it was like a light blub illuminated. It's still a Mission trip, it just looks a bit different and we all had a great time. We still have challenges and changes and the need to do things differently but different isn't bad, it's an opportunity for something new. I hope we all can find our Fruitful Spirits and move forward, choosing a positive outlook and getting excited about new opportunities, not focusing on how it used to be.

We had fun doing our own dinners and having time for just the Illuminate group in September. We want

to thank the Baruths, Reillys and Fensters for providing yummy dinners. October brings back our WOW friends so we will all be eating, learning and playing together and we are happy to be doing familiar things with a bit of a different twist.

We are planning an outing to Fontenelle Forest in October or November and are still trying to coordinate schedules of the kiddos so we can make sure most everyone can go. I am so thankful we will have this opportunity and will update you all in my weekly e-mails once a date is selected. Please remember you must have your own transportation.

We have decided to keep meeting on Wednesday nights and hold off on Sunday School for now. I am encouraging the Youth to come to worship with their families and I hope you will too.

I'm praying for you all, for strength in the waiting, flexibility, grace, good health and blessings.

Be a Blessing, Shelli

P.S. Remember when we didn't even come inside the church? We are making progress back to normal while embracing the imperfect.



OCTOBER ACTIVITIES

October 7-28 **Illuminate 5:30-7:00**

Possible Special Activity Wednesday October 21st

Fontenelle Outing on a weekend - Let me know the dates that DON'T work for you please



October 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 1p Parking Lot Fellowship 7p Troop 467 (Classrooms)	2	3
4 9:15a Children's Sunday School (Zoom) 10:30a Worship Service (In Person & Online) 11:30a Deacon Mtg (VVR/Zoom)	5 6:30p Troop 499 G (Classrooms)	6 10:30a Staff Mtg (VVR) 12:30p Adult Sunday School (Zoom) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	7 5:30p Illuminate/WOW (FH)	8 7p Troop 467 (Classrooms) 7p Worship Mtg (Zoom)	9	10
11 9:15a Children's Sunday School (Zoom) 10:30a Worship Service (In Person & Online) 6:30p Boy Scout Committee Mtg (VVR)	12 6:30p Troop 499 G (Classrooms)	13 12:30p Adult Sunday School (Zoom) 5:30p Christian Ed. Mtg (Zoom) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	14 5:30p Illuminate/WOW (FH) 6p Building & Grounds Mtg (CR)	15 7p Troop 467 (Classrooms)	16	17
18 9:15a Children's Sunday School (Zoom) 10:30a Worship Service (In Person & Online)	19 6:30p Troop 499 G (Classrooms)	20 12:30p Adult Sunday School (Zoom) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	21 5:30p Trunk or Treat 7p Choir Rehearsal	22 5:30 Presbytery Mtg (Zoom) 7p Troop 467 (Classrooms)	23	24
25 9:15a Children's Sunday School (Zoom) 10:30a Worship Service (In Person & Online)	26 6:30p Troop 499 G (Classrooms)	27 12:00p Newsletter Articles Due 12:30p Adult Sunday School (Zoom) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal 7p Troop 499 Committee Mtg (VVR)	28 5:30p Illuminate/WOW (FH) 7p Choir Rehearsal	29 7p Session Mtg (Zoom) 7p Troop 467 (Classrooms)	30	31



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October Birthdays

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 3 Flossie Flora | 17 Maggie Blazek |
| 3 Ruby Baruth | 19 Brigit Rose |
| 5 David Sanborn | 19 Kevin Regan |
| 5 Sue Tabler | 22 Linda Glenn |
| 7 Julie Daughtery-Braun | 23 Jane Hink |
| 7 Audrina Urwin | 23 Paulette Robertson |
| 8 Bill Warnes | 25 Aoife Healy |
| 10 Anne McDaniel | 28 Quentin Warren |
| 12 Suzy Drap | 30 Isabel Griffin |
| 12 David Oxtoby | 30 Beth Urwin |
| 12 Mike VanRyckeghem | 31 George Graham |
| 14 Lorraine Jeffus | 31 Roger Webster |
| 16 Elijah Warren | 31 Tanya Kochera |

