

# Hilltop Highlights

A Monthly Publication of First Presbyterian Church

## It's Okay To Talk About It!

“If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.” (Romans 14:8)

In life and in death we belong to God. God cares for us before we are brought into this world, sustains us through all our earthly days, and holds us in his loving arms when this life is over. For a Christian, death should not be feared. Nonetheless, planning your own funeral is not something most of us look forward to doing. In fact, most of us don’t want to talk about it, even to those who are closest to us.

In the Presbyterian Church, funerals and memorial services are services that witness to the resurrection hope we have in Jesus Christ. They are not dark and dreary, but an opportunity to give thanks to God for life and to look ahead to that time when God’s reign will be fully realized and we will be with God.

Our Book of Order encourages us with these words, “Because it is difficult under emotional stress to plan wisely, the session should encourage members to discuss and plan in advance the arrangements which will be necessary at the time of death, including decisions about the Christian options of burial, cremation, or donation for medical purposes. These plans should provide for arrangements which are simple, which bear witness to resurrection hope, and in which the Christian community is central.”

One of the best gifts you can ever give to those you love is to plan your funeral. Too often I wind up spending some difficult time with a family who, in the midst of their grief, is trying to figure out what you would have wished for your funeral. It is a frustrating and painful time for them.

A simple, two page form is available in the church office for you to fill out. By completing as much of the form as you are comfortable with, you will have dealt with some arrangements that are usually only done under immense pressure and by persons who may or may not know all of your wishes. You will have the assurance that your wishes are made known and that you have taken the burden of a lot of unnecessary decision making off of the ones you love.

Your completed form will be kept in a locked file cabinet in my office to be used by me or whoever is the current pastor at the appropriate time.

I hope you will take the time necessary to complete the pre-planning form, and if you are comfortable doing so, to discuss your wishes with your family. If I can be of assistance to you, please let me know. And remember, “it’s okay to talk about it!”

Grace and peace, Pastor Mike



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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
- ◆ John & Cherie Wallace for peace and healing

### Financial Information

	<u>September</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Income	*<\$24,442.46	\$267,200.20
Expenses	<u>\$28,257.74</u>	<u>\$249,880.08</u>
Difference	<\$52,700.20	\$17,320.12

\* The \$42,100.00 received from the PPP Loan was moved to a restricted account.

### Bakersplus.com

We just received the **Third Quarter of 2020** rebate from Bakers for **\$179.67** 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.



## Happenings



**Thanksgiving Food Boxes:** Due to Covid restrictions instead of bringing in food for food boxes, Bellevue Together is asking for a monetary donation of \$60 which is the estimated cost of the food including the turkey. All monetary donations need to be received by November 19th. Make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church with a memo of Thanksgiving Box. Bellevue Together will then purchase the product to make up the food boxes. This way there are less hands on the product before they go to the families.

### Volunteer Opportunities:

Friday, November 20th-Trucks and volunteers are needed to pick up food from Walmart.

Saturday, November 21st-Inventory and packing boxes

Sunday, November 22nd-3pm to 7pm-Help families when picking up boxes

Monday, November 23rd-8am to Noon and 4pm to 8pm-Help families when picking up food boxes

If you would like to volunteer to help please contact [diana@bellevuetogether.com](mailto:diana@bellevuetogether.com) to sign up.

## Christmas is Almost Here

Please be sure to go (<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/47-0379376>) when ordering your Christmas gifts from Amazon.

Each quarter, the AmazonSmile Foundation will make a donation to First Presbyterian Church. **We have received over \$550.00 since the beginning and it could be so much more if everyone who uses Amazon selects us and uses Amazon Smile when ordering.**

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.



## Happenings

Information for the following items will be sent via weekly email once final decisions have been made:

### **Hanging of the Greens**

### **Angel Tree**

### **Youth Auction**

## Advent Calendar

### **Sunday, November 29– 1st Sunday of Advent**

Worship 10:30am

Advent devotionals are available

### **Sunday, December 6 –2nd Sunday of Advent**

Worship with Communion 10:30am

### **Sunday, December 13 –3rd Sunday of Advent**

Worship 10:30am

Holiday Youth Mission Silent Auction Finale (virtual)

### **Sunday, December 20 –4th Sunday in Advent**

Music Sunday 10:30am

Christmas Joy Offering received

### **Thursday, December 24th-Christmas Eve**

Young Family Worship at 4:00 pm (Childcare is not provided)

Worship with Chancel Choir, Westminster Bells, Carols and Candlelight at 7:00 (Childcare is not provided)

## **Children's Christmas Program & Happy Jesus Birthday Party**

These two programs will not be presented this year due to Covid

## **Snow days are coming!!**

When the Bellevue Public School system closes for bad weather the church office will also be closed. Any events scheduled that day may or may not be cancelled. Closing will be determined by the committee hosting the event and an email will be sent to those participating. If Sunday Worship is cancelled it will be announced on the local TV stations as early as possible.



## DEBT PAY-OFF CAMPAIGN UPDATE

As of October 25, 2020

FPC loan balance currently stands at \$57,233. The Debt Pay-Off account now contains \$20,762 which will pay the monthly payments for November 2020 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

## UPDATED RESULTS 2021 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

As of October 25, 2020

The 2021 Stewardship Campaign officially kicked off in late September. In the first 30 days we have received 65 pledges totaling \$203,514. The average pledge is over \$3,000, or over \$250 per month. Our goal for 2021 is for pledges of \$260,000.

To those of you who have already turned in your 2021 pledge, thank you for your early response and generosity. If you have not turned in your 2021 pledge, please do so as soon as possible so the Finance Committee can produce the actual 2021 Operating Budget in November.

For any questions regarding the 2021 Stewardship Campaign, please contact me or our Financial Secretary Eric Van Sky.

Bob Jeffus-Chair, Stewardship Committee

## End of Year Contributions

To comply with IRS regulations, all contributions intended for the current year tax statement must be dated in the current year. These contributions should be turned in as early as possible and at least by the last day of the year. The financial record for the current year will be closed out on the last day of the current year.

Contributions received after December 31st will be entered in the next year's record and will appear on the next year's statement. Contributions received after December 31 cannot be back dated.

If you have any questions, please contact: Eric Van Sky, Financial Secretary, at 402-881-5210



## PER CAPITA – PER PERSON

The **required** total per capita amount due from each congregation is a combined request from the Presbytery of Missouri River Valley, Synod of Lakes and Prairies, and the General Assembly. We will owe **\$39.68** for each active member, which is a **.03** increase from last year. In 2021, our apportionment will be **\$10,515.20**. If we don't reach that amount from the per capita request, funds will be taken from somewhere else in our budget to ensure First Presbyterian meets the required per capita assessment.

### Next Steps

Take a special per capita envelope from the name tag table. Include a check for **\$39.68** for each church member in your family. Write your envelope # on your check. If you do not have the envelope, please write Per Capita in the memo portion of your check. Leave the envelope or check in the offering plate or the office by February 9th. If you would like to prepay your Per Capita for next year just go ahead and place your envelope in the offering plate by December 31st this year. Our church must pay our total per capita amount by February 15, 2021

## News from Welcome School

News from Welcome School: October has been super exciting and full of activities!

Mid-October we hosted a fun Father's Night for all the students and their Dads. The dads got to play with their children and see what a day at Welcome School looks like. We had an amazing response that night and very engaged Dads! This month will be the Mom's turn.

If you were to walk by the Welcome School classrooms, you would see centers reflecting a campground with a real tent, a fire station with a firetruck, and a farm with a horse!! It's so fun to watch the kids so engaged in their learning every day. God Bless, Tara Williams - Director



## Children's Ministry



Linda Reffert

My sincere thanks to all of our church family who came to help with Trunk or Treat! We knew it would be a smaller event, because we didn't open it to the public this year (darn Covid!) but we got a great response. We had 58 kiddos and their parents come through our line and they were very appreciative. Many will not be trick or treating in their neighborhoods or doing other Halloween events, so it was extra special. Thanks go to: June Kouba, Tom & Laura Miller, the Blazek Family, the Reilly Family, the Warren Family, our Youth and John & Shelli Dart, Tara Williams (Welcome School director) and her daughter Emma, Bev Snowden, Kevin & Kim Regan, Jack & Barb Simmons, Mary Bond, Steve & Alice Renner, Mike & Sharon Elliott, Jack & Sally Syphers, Bryan & Rachel Burg, Rick & Marsha Holbert, Liane Kirmis, the Boyd Family and Mike & Sue Tabler for hosting car trunks or tables. And thanks to Deb Hudson, Sheryl Shottenkirk and Marty Davis for donating huge bags full of candy.

As you may remember, I am hosting a Children's Sunday School each Sunday morning from 9:15 to 9:45 over Zoom. Our attendance varies a lot but it is going well. Some kids are still in their jammies and some are in Sunday finery with their hair all combed. The variety is rather delightful. I have learned a lot since we began meeting over Zoom last spring and the kids are whizzes at technology. If your family is not currently participating in Sunday School and you would like to join in, it's never too late. Just let me know and I will send you the link and get you a supply bag(s). I have us scheduled to continue over Zoom for all of 1st semester. I would guess right now that we will continue over Zoom most of the school year. It doesn't look like the vaccine will become readily available for some time.

WOW is going well too. We have 12 kids participating and they are divided into 2 groups. With social distancing, it fills the rooms more than I would have imagined. Everyone from the youngest kiddos to our most senior adult volunteers have been super cooperative with wearing masks and temperature checks and social distancing and I sure appreciate it! As Covid numbers continue to climb in our city and state, there is no question Covid is terribly contagious.

I am thankful to have Liane Kirmis on board this year doing Children's Music. She is a natural teacher and a great musician so it's been a gift for all. I look forward to when the kids can share one of their songs with the congregation on a Sunday. It will probably have to be taped ahead, but it will be a delight.

Assuming the session approves it, we will host two Christmas Eve services again this year. The first will be especially geared to young families and it will be held at 4 PM instead of 5, to allow us time to thoroughly disinfect the Sanctuary before the 7 PM service. As always, I want to have as many kids and youth participating in the service as possible. All of the scripture readings and much of the music will need to be taped ahead, so I am already recruiting and filling spots. Taping will be done in November and the very beginning of December. There are 6 scripture readings and most will be done in groups of 2 to 3. Cindy Reilly will be doing the recording. With just 6 spots to fill, they will go quickly. Please let me know ASAP if you want your family involved. We won't be doing the 15 minutes of music prior to the service, so there are less music spots to fill than usual. Half are full already. If you have a child musician who is hoping to do something for Christmas Eve, let me know immediately.

We won't be doing a Children's Christmas program or Happy Birthday Jesus party this year because of Covid. But the Christian Education team will be giving each child a Christmas book. We started letting kids choose their own from a table full of choices and that went over so well, we plan to do it again this year. Children that are here for WOW or worship will be invited in family or very small groups to make their choices in mid-December. Any child who does not participate in either of those activities can make arrangement with me to stop by the church on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday in December to choose their book.

Finally, I want to thank Kathryn Rose for coming to talk to me about resuming giving treats to children and youth (and adults, for that matter!) who can recite a Bible verse to me. We had already figured out a way to do it safely in WOW, but other children haven't been getting a chance and it wasn't on my radar to change that. It is now! Beginning immediately, I will meet anyone who wants to recite a Bible verse after Worship, at the table in the back corner of the Library. I'll use a tray and tongs. Participants will need to be patient and try to maintain social distancing while they wait.



## November Youth Fellowship (YF) News



*“Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of*

*the faith.”*

*Galatians 6:9-10*

I don't know how many of you feel the same but I am growing weary of how long this pandemic is keeping us away from family and friends and a sense of normalcy. This scripture spoke to me about that weariness. We must still keep doing good, supporting each other, and still do whatever necessary to ensure we can be together and worship together safely. What can we do to be supportive? Call someone you haven't seen in awhile, send a note or letter. A handwritten note is such a wonderful gift. Our church family has provided food for those in need. I am so proud that although we may be weary of how long this is lasting we are not weary of supporting others. We are so blessed to be part of a loving, giving, and caring church family!

We are so lucky to resume semi-normal Wednesday nights with WOW and Illuminate together. The children and youth are doing a great job with wearing a mask, keeping each other safe, and NOT sharing. Who would have every thought you'd be proud of kids for not sharing. Ha Ha!

Many thanks go out to our volunteers for being flexible and making sure we can still meet together. It really is a bit crazy to have all the tables out and only have 3 people per table but we are so happy we are together.

We changed Trick or Treat around the church into Trunk or Treat outside for our church family and Welcome School families. We had great volunteers and



great turnout of families. A number of people thanked us at the youth table and said their kids have been so sad to miss out on their normal activities and were so scared all of Halloween would be cancelled and they wanted us to know how much joy this brought their kids. Thanks to everyone who made this possible!

We are going to the Tree Adventures on November 1 with Youth Fellowship, thanks so much for a generous donation that made this possible. I hope we continue to have some good weather so we can get outside and enjoy the lovely Fall weather.

I continue praying for us all, for strength in the waiting, flexibility, grace, good health and blessings.

Be a Blessing, Shelli



### OCTOBER ACTIVITIES

**November 1 11:50am Tree Adventures at Fontenelle**

**November 4, 11, 18 Illuminate**

**We will set up the Angel Tree the week before Thanksgiving**





# November 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:15a Children's Sunday School (Zoom) 10:30a Worship Service (In Person/Online)	2 Troop 499G (Classrooms)	3 10:30a Staff Mtg (VVR) 12:30p Adult Sunday Sch (Zoom) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	4 5:30p Illuminate/WOW (FH) 7p Choir Rehearsal	5 7p Troop 467 (Classrooms)	6	7 10a Fall Clean Up
8 9:15a Children's Sunday School (Zoom) 10:30a Worship Service (In Person/Online)	9 Troop 499G (Classrooms)	10 12:30p Adult Sunday Sch (Zoom) 5:30p Christian Ed. Mtg (Zoom)	11 5:30p Illuminate/WOW (FH) 6p Building & Grounds (CR)	12 6:30p Membership (Zoom) 7p Troop 467 (Classrooms)	13	14
15 9:15a Children's Sunday School (Zoom) 10:30a Worship Service (In Person/Online)	16 Troop 499G (Classrooms)	17 12:30p Adult Sunday Sch (Zoom) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	18 5:30p Illuminate/WOW (FH) 7p Choir Rehearsal	19 7p Troop 467 (Classrooms) 7p Session (Zoom)	20	21
22 9:15a Children's Sunday School (Zoom) 10:30a Worship Service (In Person/Online)	23 Troop 499G (Classrooms)	24 12:30p Adult Sunday Sch (Zoom) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal 7p Troop 499 Mtg (VVR)	25 5:30p Illuminate/WOW (FH)	26 <b>Church Office is Closed</b>	27	28
29 9:15a Children's Sunday School (Zoom) 10:30a Worship Service (In Person/Online)	30 Troop 499G (Classrooms)					

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## November Birthdays:

- |                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2 Joyce Luster          | 17 Ethan deZafra        |
| 3 Jim Millard           | 18 Andrew Oxtoby        |
| 6 Brooks Brink          | 21 Isabella Keaton      |
| 6 Margaret Jackson      | 23 Christy VanRyckeghem |
| 8 Willis Regier         | 24 Ed Hink              |
| 11 John Eidenmiller     | 24 Don Martin           |
| 11 Diane Regier         | 24 Bethany Dart         |
| 13 Marty Griffin        | 26 Roger Freier         |
| 15 Virginia Eidenmiller | 28 Sharon Elliott       |
| 16 Rick Holbert         | 29 Jack Reilly          |
| 17 Chuck Nelson         | 30 Ashley Hudson        |

