



Hilltop Highlights

A Monthly Publication of First Presbyterian Church

A Greater Debt

In Paul's letter to the Romans he reminds us of the need to be serious about our faith with these words..."*And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.*" (Ro 13:11-12)

These words from Paul are always good advice. It is never too late to wake up and smell the coffee and it is certainly always the right time to put on the armor of light, as Paul puts it. No matter how young or old we are, it should be pretty obvious to us that the clock is ticking. Every day that passes reminds us that it may be our last. Living with that thought in the back of our mind helps us to stay focused on our mortality, focused on our walk with Christ and focused on how we should be living.

Like all good students of Scripture though, we need to carefully look at the context of these words from Paul. He begins this discussion by saying, "And do this, understanding the present time." While Paul does go on to explain what about this present time we need to understand, that is, that it may be later than we think or want to accept, that first part of his opening raises an even bigger question. Do what? Do what in light of how late it is already?

If we look back a few verses, Paul has just finished a discourse on love. A discourse that sounds an awful lot like words Jesus has used before...

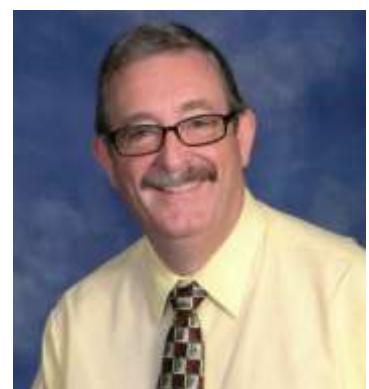
"Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law." (Ro 13:8-10)

As we begin another Season of Advent, we remember that our salvation is indeed near than it has ever been. As we walk in the light of Christ, let us remember also the continuing debt of love that we owe to each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

My prayer for you all this holiday season is that you will find that love in yourselves, in your families, in your friends and neighbors and in our community.

As you do your shopping this season, remember this. If there is any debt worthy of incurring this Christmas, it is the debt to love one another. As that blessed day of Christ's return comes ever closer for us, may your debt of love only increase and may you never stop paying on that debt to those God sends into your life.

Blessings, Pastor Mike



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



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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
Tu, W, Th 8:30 am to 4:30 pm (hours may vary)

Shelli Dart (Youth Ministry Director)-shelli.dart@gmail.com
Tu, Th 10:30 am to 3:00 pm (hours may vary)

Liane Kirmis (Music Ministry Director)-lianekirmis12@gmail.com

Dirk Lindner (Organist)-dirk16@cox.net

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

**We Keep in Our Prayers**

- ◆ Jim Chatelain who is in rehab.
- ◆ Gary Sands who is recovering from surgery on his leg.
- ◆ Joyce Ritchey as she recovers from a fall.
- ◆ Pastor Mike's mom Eileen as she struggles with health issues.
- ◆ Prayers for Betty Woolfe who is recovering from a broken leg.

Financial Information

	<u>October</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Income	\$20,352.08	\$261,661.05
Expenses	\$31,495.56	\$291,141.74
Difference	<\$11,143.48	<\$29,480.69



Happenings

Memorial Poinsettias

Poinsettias have been ordered this Christmas season to decorate our sanctuary. If you would like to purchase a plant in memory or honor of a loved one, please pick up a form at the table in the Library before or after church, fill it out and place it in the offering plate or bring it by the church office. The form and your money must be received by December 12th. The price this year will be **\$13** per 8" plant. You may pick up your plant(s) after the 7:00 pm worship service December 24th.

Youth Mission Silent Auction & Luncheon

It is time for our annual fundraising event which began on **Sunday, November 14th**. The proceeds fund our youth mission projects for 2022. We need your help in providing donated craft items, holiday gift items, gift baskets for children and adults, themed baskets, babysitting hours, yard work, books and toys...you name it!

Items or descriptions of items will be on display, with bid sheets and the congregation is invited to bid on any items they may wish to purchase.

Sunday, December 12th will be the last day for bidding. The bidding will close 30 minutes after worship service and the winners will be announced at a luncheon, hosted by the youth and youth leaders, following the service. If you would like to contribute or have any questions, please contact Shelli Dart at the church office (402-291-1104). Thank you for your support!



The Angel Tree is ready. This is a great opportunity to help more families celebrate Christmas, no matter their financial status. Each angel on the tree has a gift request and a child's age for your reference. All gifts should be returned, unwrapped to the Church by Sunday, December 5th so they can be distributed to families the next weekend. You may put your gift in a shopping bag or a pretty Christmas bag if you choose. Do not wrap. Thank you for your support!

"On the 4th day of Christmas . . ." Dirk Lindner will present a program of Christmas music, Christmas at the Organ, on Wednesday, December 29th at 2:00 p.m. After all the hustle and bustle is over, come and enjoy the music of Christmas, in a variety of settings for organ. Relax and enjoy the music of the season, during the season! This program will be a live event only; it will not be streamed on Facebook. Please plan to come, and invite a friend!



Advent Calendar

Sunday, November 28– 1st Sunday of Advent

Worship at 10:30am

Hanging of the Greens at 5:30pm

Sunday, December 5 – 2nd Sunday in Advent

Worship with Communion and Westminster Bells 10:30am

Sunday, December 12 – 3rd Sunday in Advent

Worship and Children's Christmas Program at 10:30am

Happy Birthday, Jesus!

Holiday Youth Mission Silent Auction & Luncheon at 11:30am

Sunday, December 19– 4th Sunday of Advent

Worship and Chancel Choir Cantata 10:30am

Christmas Joy Offering received

Friday, December 24th-Christmas Eve

Young Family Worship at 5:00 pm (Childcare is not provided)

Pre-Service Music Performances at 6:30pm

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

Sunday, December 26

No Sunday School

Worship and Carol Singing 10:30am in Fellowship Hall

Children's Christmas Program

Please join us as we celebrate the Reason for the Season--Jesus!

The Children's Christmas program will be presented during worship on **Sunday, December 12th**.

The children have been busy practicing their songs on Sunday and a dress rehearsal will take place Saturday, **December 11th at 9:30am** in the sanctuary.

Please call or email Linda Reffert if you have questions lkreffert@aol.com or 402-291-1104

Happy Birthday, Jesus

The annual Happy Birthday, Jesus party is on **Sunday, December 12th**. After the children have presented their Christmas program in worship, they will go to the Valley Vista Room where the party will be held. Treats will be provided.

The Christian Education committee will have games and activities as well as a special Christmas gift for each child.



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**



Contingency Fund



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.

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.



Bakersplus.com

We just received the **Third Quarter of 2021** rebate from Bakers for **\$178.50** this is wonderful and includes **46** 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.



2022 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

Results as of November 15, 2021

Sunday, October 10th was Stewardship Commitment Sunday. We have now received 71 pledges totaling \$243,419. To those of you have already turned in your 2022 pledge, thank you for your generosity. If you have not turned in your pledge please do so as soon as you can.

If you wish to pre-pay part or all of your 2022 pledge---be sure to do so before December 31, 2021.



For any questions regarding the 2022 Stewardship Campaign, please contact me or our Financial Secretary Eric Van Sky.

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.

News from Welcome School

News from Welcome School: November has been full of awesome activities!

In November we had Father's Night. 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!

From November 1st through the 19th, we had our annual "Feed the Turkey" food drive. The children were able to collect a lot of wonderful items and donate it all to the Bellevue Food Pantry.

This fall, Welcome School participated in the Best of Bellevue Contest. We won Best Childcare in 2021 for the 4th year in a row! We want to thank all of the people who showed their support for us and voted. We are truly blessed!



Children's Ministry



Linda Reffert

When we started our fall WOW schedule, it was with the hope that we would be able to meet in person all semester. Covid cut our in-person meeting schedule way short last year and we were holding our breath about this year. I am so thankful that we are almost to the end of 1st semester and it's all been in person! We made do with Zoom meetings for the bulk of last year, but they were far from ideal. Now our prayer is that we can make it through this whole school year meeting in person!

Our last WOW of 2021 is Wednesday, December 8th. Our first WOW of 2022 will be Wednesday, January 12th. Sunday school takes a shorter break. Our last Sunday school of 2021 is December 19th and our first one of 2022 is Sunday, January 9th.

A lot is happening in this next month! Liane Kirmis is working like crazy to get the kids ready for their Christmas program during worship on December 12th. Thanks go out to Cindy Reilly, Becca Griffin and Nora Boyd for their help. The program should be really cute. Lots of kids have lines and solos or are part of ensembles. Liane created lots of opportunities for kids to shine. And we sure appreciate Mandi Crick being willing to accompany the program.

After the Christmas program, the kids will head into Valley Vista for their Happy Birthday Jesus party. The Deacons are providing treats. Thanks go out to Cathy Talmadge and Sandra Ryks for making cupcakes for the kids, to Mary Bond for providing water bottles and to Becky Baruth for

helping with the party. At this party, the kids will get to choose their Christmas book. It has worked really well to set up a table and let kids choose their book and we will continue that this year. We offer a big variety of books from traditional Christmas books to cookbooks and Bibles. It's really interesting to see the kids choose what they most want, and I just love it when they get all excited and can't wait to launch into their new book!

On December 15th I will be visiting each of the Welcome School classrooms to tell the kids the Christmas story in an audience participation way. The kids each get to hold a character in the story or an animal and as I tell the story, they bring up their person, angel or animal at just the right time. You can tell some of the kids know the story well, because they know exactly who they want to hold. But not all of them know the story. I make sure to end by telling them that God loves each of them dearly and that Jesus was born for ALL of us. Liane will meet with Welcome School classes on a different morning, and lead them in some fun Christmas songs, including some with motions.

On Christmas Eve at 5 PM we will hold our early worship service and I have begun the process of recruiting adults, youth and children to help with greeting, lighting advent candles, reading scripture and providing vocal or instrumental music. I have a long way to go! If you are the parent of a child or youth and you'd like to participate as a family or you'd like your child to participate in some way, either ahead of time on a recording or during the service, please, please let me know! Email or call or catch me before or after worship. I don't always know who to ask and I really hate the idea of missing someone who would love to be a part of it!



December Youth Fellowship (YF) News



Matthew 5:1-16 Are the Beatitudes, a great reminder of what God calls us to be but also what God calls us - peacemakers, merciful, salt of the earth, blessed.

We have been studying Everybody Always and talking about the easy and hard people to love which has taken us into a discussion on name calling and harsh words that people speak. Priscilla Shirer says “The Names That God Calls You Are The Only Ones You Should Be Answering To” and I think that is a great reminder. God calls us Beloved, Blessed, His Children, Salt, Light, so many lovely things. We are striving to think of those words rather than the hurtful words that can be thrown at us at times. The Bulletin Board outside my office will have some of our ideas based on this study. I hope you pop over and check it out.

It's been a fun and busy time in Youth Fellowship this past month and December looks to be more of the same. We baked cookies for care packages, did clean up for the Miller/Stevens and the Jeffus families and got our Angel Tree and Silent Auction tables put up. We are in person for Sunday School and



Illuminate and so thankful for the difference a year makes!

December 1st we will do our annual shopping for the Angel Tree and December 12th is our largest fundraiser of the year our Soup Luncheon and Silent Auction fundraiser for the Youth Fellowship. This year we are going to Triennium so we are very excited for another successful event.

I have been working with two other churches to do Presbytery wide events for our Youth which will include worship with a Praise band, food and games. I am so excited to have these opportunities for the Youth to all get together and make new friends and hopefully meet some folks we will be traveling with this summer to Triennium. Our first group event will be Neon Night at West Hills Presbyterian Church on December 29th from 7-11pm.

I hope you all are looking forward to the blessing of Christmas and the New Year. I hope they are both filled with Joy and Love and Laughter.

Be a Blessing,
Shelli



DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Dec 1 | Illuminate and Angel Tree Shopping Day |
| Dec 8 | Last Illuminate of the year |
| Dec 12 | Silent Auction Luncheon 9am-1:30pm |
| Dec 29 | Neon Night at West Hills 7pm-11pm |



December 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
(Sanc) Sanctuary Room	(CR) Cry Room		1	2	3	4
(VVR) Valley Vista Room	(Z) Zoom		5:30p WOW/Illuminate	7p Troop 467		
(FH) Fellowship Hall	(L) Library		7p Choir Rehearsal			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9:00a Sunday School						
10:00a Coffee Fellowship						
10:30a Worship Service (IP/FB)						
10:30a Worship Service (IP/FB)						
11:30a Deacons Meeting (VVR)						
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9:00a Sunday School						
10:00a Coffee Fellowship						
10:30a Worship Service (IP/FB)						
10:30a Children's Christmas Program/Jesus Birthday Party (IP/FB)						
11:30a Youth Auction/Luncheon						
2:00pm Private Event (Sanc)						
6:30p Troop 467 Comm Mtg						
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
9:00a Sunday School						
10:00a Coffee Fellowship						
10:30a Worship Service/Cantata (IP/FB)						
11:30a Congregational Mtg/ Election of Officers						
26	27	28	29	30	31	
10:00a Coffee Fellowship	Church Office is Closed	Church Office is Closed	Church Office is Closed	Church Office is Closed		
10:30a Worship Service (FH) (IP/FB)			7:00p Youth Night (Westhills)	7p Troop 467		

First Presbyterian Church
1220 Bellevue Blvd. South
Bellevue, NE 68005
Phone: 402-291-1104



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December Birthdays:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 3 Joyce Ritchey | 14 Barb Carlson |
| 4 Tanya Lewis | 14 Doris Hutto |
| 4 Rita Sands | 15 Gary Sands |
| 4 Nicollette Warren | 16 Tom O'Riordan |
| 5 Karen Albert | 21 Nellie Renter |
| 6 Tom Ryks | 21 Sandra Ryks |
| 11 Jack Drap | 21 Nancy Blazek |
| 11 Kathy White | 23 Lana Griffiths |
| 13 John Dawson | 24 Dave Hansen |
| 13 Stephanie Johnson | 25 Tom Miller |
| 13 Judy Thompson | 28 Coleen Greiner |



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