

Hilltop Highlights

A Monthly Publication of First Presbyterian Church

A Different Road

“In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.”” Matthew 2:1-2

You are all familiar with the Christmas song “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” right? The song that never seems to end. Believe it or not, there should be one more verse. The thirteenth and the best day of Christmas is left out. Why is it the best day? Because it is the Feast of the Epiphany. January 6th. The day that we remember the wise men who followed the star and came to see the new thing that God was doing. For the church, Epiphany is a season that begins on January 6 and runs until Lent starts.

Epiphany comes from two Greek words epi and phaino. Combined, the two words mean “to show forth” or “appear.” During the season of Epiphany, the focus and purpose of the Scriptures we read in worship are chosen to “show forth” or make known to the world that Jesus is Immanuel, “God with us.” The season of Epiphany helps us see who Jesus is and to understand what he has done for us. That will be the focus of the Lent and Easter seasons which follow Epiphany. So if you have ever wondered why we go from Jesus’ birth to his death in just a few short months, now you know!

In the Christmas story, the wise men represent “the world,” the outsiders who follow the star and take great joy at finding, at long last, Jesus. Later, they will avoid King Herod and travel home by a different road to avoid him and his evil plot against Jesus.

Just like the wise men, the season of Epiphany is a reminder to us that we are called to do the same. To travel by a different road. As we discover more and more deeply who is this Jesus, God made real for us, then we can’t help but travel through our lives in new and different ways.

Now that the craziness of the Christmas season is over and a brand new year has begun, what new ways is God inviting you to live out your faith? In what new ways can you let those in your life know how your life in Christ is transforming you? What new roads are you called to walk as you “show forth” the joy of God with us? New year. New life. New journey with Christ. May this New Year find your life filled with the glory of Christ lived out in new ways of loving and serving God’s children.

Blessings, Pastor Mike



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



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We Keep in Our Prayers

- ◆ Gary Sands who is recovering at home.
- ◆ Joyce Ritchey for peace and comfort in home hospice care.
- ◆ Pastor Mike's mom Eileen as she struggles with health issues.
- ◆ Kathy White and family for comfort and peace.
- ◆ Jane Hink who is recovering at home.
- ◆ All those who are missing loved ones during the holidays.

Financial Information

	<u>November</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Income	\$20,239.79	\$281,900.84
Expenses	\$31,130.53	\$322,225.27
Difference	<\$10,890.74	<\$40,324.43



PER CAPITA – PER PERSON

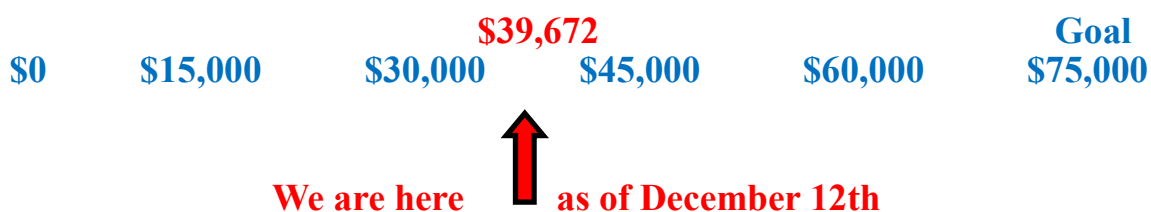
Per Capita is a set amount of money (apportionment) per member that congregations pay to the larger Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It is a Presbyterian Covenant Community Fund - part of the glue that holds Presbyterians together. Because every Presbyterian shares in the benefit of the PC(USA)'s system of government, the expenses associated with coordinating and performing the functions of that system should be shared by everyone as well. The Per Capita amount per individual member in 2022 is \$39.68. All members are invited to contribute Per Capita as an additional amount above and beyond the estimate of giving for the annual Stewardship Campaign.

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. In 2022, our apportionment will be **\$10,118.40**. **We were \$4,000.00 short in 2021 so the remaining amount came from the General Fund which contributed to the negative balance last year.** If we don't reach that amount from the per capita request this year the funds will again be taken from somewhere else in our budget to ensure First Presbyterian meets the required per capita assessment.

Next Steps

Please take a special per capita envelope from the name tag table. Include a check for **\$39.68** for each church member in your family and extra if you can for shut-ins and confirmands who are unable to pay. 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 14th. Our church must pay our total per capita amount by February 15, 2022.

Contingency Fund



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.



The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, January 23rd, immediately following the Worship Service. Lunch will be served by the youth and a free-will offering will support the youth's mission trips in 2022. The 2021 annual report, 2022 budget will be reviewed, and the Pastor's Terms of Call will be approved. There will be activities for the children during the meeting. Join us and find out what's happening at First Presbyterian Church.

New Officers for 2022

Elders

Jean Jacobson (Building & Grounds)
 Jody Clark (Fellowship)
 Rick Kirmis (Worship)
 Don Glenn (Finance)
 Nancy Shultz (Christian Education)
 Becky Berg (Membership)
 Brian Wells (Personnel)

Foundation Board

Denise Seaman
 Lloyd Dowding
 Tom Miller

Deacons

Jack Simmons
 Sally Syphers
 Mary Bond
 Barb Carlson
 Joyce Luster
 Jean Lindfors

De-Greening of the Church-On Sunday, January 9th, immediately following the Worship Service we pack up the Christmas decorations for another year in preparation for all that 2022 has to offer!

Amazon Smile

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

Each quarter, the AmazonSmile Foundation will make a donation to First Presbyterian Church. **We have received since the beginning 3 years ago \$919.16 as of November 1st it could be so much more if everyone who uses Amazon selects us and uses Amazon Smile when ordering.**

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.



Small Gift, Big Impact

This comes to us from the Presbyterian Agency – As Presbyterians, we are a people rooted in the grace of Jesus Christ. Generous gifts to the Presbyterian Giving Catalog are signs of our gratitude: feeding the hungry, comforting the brokenhearted and sharing our faith with young and old. By joining our gifts together, however large or small, we expand our witness to God's gracious and abundant work in the world.

As of December 20th, our church family has contributed \$3,337.00 to the Giving Catalog project. This money will enable the Mission Agency to supply the following: 7 sewing machines, 1 kitchen kit, 6 fishing nets, 1 emergency food grant, 4 famine relief food vouchers, 3 garden well shares, 1 irrigation water pump, 2 rainwater catchment system, 3 water filters, 4 pair of goats, 1 cow share, 9 families of chickens, 5 piglets, educating 10 children, agriculture training for 2 youth, 3 packs of Moringa tree seeds, 14 sets of farming tools, and 3 packages of rice seeds.

Thanks go out to these people for choosing to be part of this great program this year: Darald & Becky Berg, Don & Linda Glenn, the Reilly family, JoAnne Nielsen, Mike & Sue Tabler, Sheryl Shottenkirk, Jerry & June Kouba, Rick & Marsha Holbert, Ron & Joyce Luster, Mary Bond, Brian & Joyce Wells, Randy & Linda Reffert, Coleen Greiner, Landy & Jean Jacobson, Don & Barb Carlson, Jack & Barb Simmons, Mike & Sharon Elliott, Jack & Sally Syphers, Rick & Liane Kirmis, Plyman & Anita Chappell, John & Nancy Shultz, Jim & Cathy Talmadge, Joe & Judy Medakovich, John & Betty Kieran, Anne Webster, Tom & Nancy Blazek and the Baruth family.



I would like to wish everyone at First Presbyterian Happy Holidays! **Katelyn Forrest Talmadge**

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.



...I will sing and make music with all my soul. Psalm 108:1

It has been such a blessing to me to hear the musical offerings from all our wonderful church musicians this fall and especially during the Advent and Christmas season. So many have generously given of their time and talents to Glorify God and draw us all nearer to Him during our worship services.

I would like to extend a BIG note 🎵 of thanks to all who have participated in the music ministry and brought Joy to our First Pres. family - from the exuberant voices of our littlest ones to our youth singers and instrumentalists, Westminster Bell ringers, Chancel Choir singers, outstanding Organist, and all the excellent instrumentalists who have accompanied them and provided special music. You are each a blessing and are greatly appreciated.

As we are daily reminded of the troubles in our world, and we pray for those who are grieving, struggling and lost, I think of these lyrics from Bill & Gloria Gaither and look forward to what God has in store in the New Year:

" You ask me why my heart keeps singing, how can I sing when things go wrong, but since I've found the source of the music, I just can't help it, God gave the song."

Thanks be to God for giving us Jesus, our Song. Blessings, Liane

Welcome School

The kids were full of the holiday spirit in December! They were busy wrapping presents, making gifts for their parents, acting out the Christmas Story and using lots and lots of glitter! Ms. Linda came and told us the real meaning of Christmas, celebrating Jesus Christ's birth. Ms. Liane sang some fun Christmas songs with us too! A big thank you to these two wonderful ladies!!

Welcome School's winter break is from Wednesday, December 22nd – Wednesday, January 5th. School resumes on Thursday, January 6th.

Have a wonderful holiday season! God bless, Tara Williams, Welcome School Director



Children's Ministry



Linda Reffert

First off – Adults of First Presbyterian, I'd like to put together a 5 or 6 week study, either in person or by Zoom (or maybe even both) starting in January. I have several possible studies but need to figure out which is most

interesting to others. If you would be interested in doing any of these, would you please let me know ASAP? Also whether day or evening works for you. 1.) A discussion and prayer group based off devotions and scripture from *Jesus Calling*. 2.) There is a brand new Bible Study just coming out from Lysa TerKeurst called *Seeing Jesus in the Old Testament*. I bet it is well written and interesting to do. And 3.) A book through PCUSA called *From Daughters to Disciples; Women's Stories from the New Testament*. I read a couple chapter and it's well written, easy to read and has thoughtful discussion questions. Are you interested in any of these ideas?

Moving on to Children, weren't they adorable in the Christmas program on Sunday, December 12th! A lot of work and heart went into that program and we are so grateful to Liane Kirmis for choosing the program and putting it all together. And to Mandi Crick for accompanying the kids, to Cindy Reilly for serving as substitute director during the times that Liane was gone and to John Dart for coming to multiple rehearsals and getting the sound just right. The kids didn't know several of the songs and some of them had never had solos or speaking parts before but they all worked hard and worked together and it was lovely.

As I write this, we're working away to put together the 5 PM Christmas Eve service. It will be a joyful and heartfelt celebration of the birth of our Lord and

Savior. I am so thankful to everyone who has agreed to be a part of the team putting this together! Thanks go out to Pastor Mike; the Crick Family; the Reilly Family; June Kouba; Roger Webster; Megan & Nicollette Warren; Jonathan, Evie & Sam Highbargin; Josh Blazek; Rick & Bryan Kirmis; Becca, Izzy, Emerson & Jackson Griffin; Makayla Coats; Margot & Eliza Boyd; John Dart. I think this will be a really nice service and I hope you will consider joining us!

Sunday School is taking 2 weeks off (Dec. 26th and Jan. 2nd). We will start back up on the 9th. And we'll jump back into the Old Testament where we left off. WOW will resume on Wednesday, January 12th. Our youngest group of kids will move into favorite New Testament stories, which we read interactively and do some kind of related game or craft project. Our oldest kids will continue to work on getting more comfortable with Bible usage and we'll play more related games this next semester and spend less time on worksheets. They get faster and more confident all the time at finding what they are looking for.

In a normal year, we would have a Free Family Movie Night during Christmas Break. Once kids 5 and up could be vaccinated, I was really tempted to go ahead and schedule this. I have the movie all picked out. But then the Covid numbers kept going up and up. Kids under 5 still can't be vaccinated and we typically get quite a few itty bitties. So I had to give up that idea. If Covid numbers go down, maybe we can still host a movie night this spring. I sure hope so.

The annual church meeting is coming up on Sunday, January 23rd following Worship. Once again I will provide babysitting downstairs during the meeting. I'll have crafts and games set up for a wide variety of ages and kids can choose what they'd like to do. They'll have fun, I promise!



January Youth Fellowship (YF) News



"This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." Psalm 118:24

As we enter the new year I thought this was a great scripture to start with. Each day is a gift from God, with new opportunities, grace and blessings!

It was absolutely delightful to bake cookies, go Angel Tree shopping, play games, and have our Luncheon and Auction this year among all the other things we were able to enjoy together. What a Blessing it was to be able to celebrate life together this year.



Many thanks to those who donated to our auction and those that purchased items and stayed for our soup luncheon. We are still waiting on the final numbers but so far we have earned over \$1,600. With Triennium this year it is such a blessing to have all of your support.

This year Confirmation will be in the Spring, starting on the 12th and run for 10 weeks from 6-7pm. Confirmation is for students currently in 8th grade or those older students who have not yet been confirmed.

Our tradition in January is to write a letter to ourselves reflecting on the past year, our favorite memories and those that we would do differently. We also reflect on our hopes for the coming year and our future. I think this would be an interesting thing for all of us to do. I would say hold on to what you are proud of and reflect on the things you would change, think of how you can do better in the future and then leave those things in the past.



Sometimes we dwell on past hurts or regrets so much they over shadow the joys we experience. Think of the bad stuff, learn from it and then give it over to God. Move forward, embrace the new year and new opportunities. That is what I encourage the Youth to do and I pray you all will do the same in the coming New Year.

I hope your New Year is full of Joy and Love and Laughter.

Be a Blessing, Shelli



JANUARY ACTIVITIES

- | | |
|--------|--------------------------------------|
| Jan 9 | Sunday School resumes at 9am |
| Jan 12 | Illuminate resumes 5:30-7 |
| Jan 23 | Confirmation begins 6-7pm (10 weeks) |
| | Congregational Luncheon 9-1:30pm |



January 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
(Sanc) Sanctuary (Z) Zoom (VVR) Valley Vista Rm (CR) Cry Room (FH) Fellowship Hall (L) Library						
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10:00a Coffee Fellowship 10:30a Worship Service (IP/FB) 11:30a Deacons Mtg (VVR)	1:15p Heritage Ridge	10:30a Staff Mtg (VVR) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	7p Choir Rehearsal	7p Troop 467		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
9:00a Sunday School 10:00a Coffee Fellowship 10:30a Worship Service (IP/FB) 11:30a De-greening the Church 6:30p Troop 467 Comm Mtg	10:30a PEO (VVR/FH)	5:30 Christian Ed Mtg (CR) 7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	9a PEO (VVR/FH) 5:30 WOW/Illuminate 6p B & G Mtg (VVR) 6p Finance Mtg (CR) 7p Choir Rehearsal	6:30p Membership Mtg (VVR) 7p Worship Mtg (CR) 7p Troop 467		
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
9:00a Sunday School 10:00a Coffee Fellowship 10:30a Worship Service (IP/FB) 11:30a Fellowship Mtg (VVR)		7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	5:30 WOW/Illuminate 7p Choir Rehearsal	7p Troop 467		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
9:00a Sunday School 10:00a Coffee Fellowship 10:30a Worship Service (FH) (IP/FB) 11:30a Annual Congregational Mtg (FH)		7p Bell Choir Rehearsal	5:30 WOW/Illuminate 7p Choir Rehearsal	7:00p Session Mtg (Zoom) 7p Troop 467		
30	31					
9:00a Sunday School 10:00a Coffee Fellowship 10:30a Worship Service (IP/FB)						

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January Birthdays:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Mel Hess | 16 Zachary Keaton |
| 2 Cassi Norton | 20 Judy Medakovich |
| 3 Dianna Martin | 20 Curt Hart |
| 6 Sara Oxtoby | 21 Shelli Dart |
| 7 Mariah Kilpatrick | 21 Beth Sanborn |
| 8 Tim Lehr | 22 Norm Grenon |
| 8 Elizabeth VanSky | 23 Elijah Fenster |
| 12 Liane Kirmis | 24 Jack Syphers |
| 13 Katie Crick | 25 Lou Worm |
| 13 Bill Zipse | 29 Kim Grenon |
| 14 Libby Grenon | 29 Lloyd Johnson |
| 14 Evelyn Highbargin | |

