



From the Heights

**December
2023**

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Pastor's Message

Dear Church Family,

So that you know about the variety of events that happen here, the programs and the meetings happening in the life of the church, we publish a list in a variety of ways. The newsletter, hotline, the calendar we list in the worship handout and the slides before and after worship, all contain wonderful information about whats coming up in the life of the church and what you can expect to find happening in the church building.

Even from that listing alone, you can know that the church is a busy place. But what you may not know about is just how busy the church is, aside and apart from all of the things that you know about.

Sure, some days around here are quiet, but most are not. On any given day, we have multiple people in and out of the building for a variety of purposes, including vendors who come in to do contracted work and people coming in to chat with one of us on staff. But, mostly, the people in and out of the building are you. Volunteers from the church who are coming in and giving of the gift of their time and talents. You are here to clean, maintain, and repair the building and the whole of the property. You are here to set up for programs and to clean up after them. You are here to prepare for the events that are on the list and to make sure that everything is set and ready to go. You are here to practice the music that you give in worship. You are here to gather around coffee and laughter.

You. Are. Here.

Friends, at the end of the day, I see you. I appreciate you. I want you to know how important and good the work you do is and how much you are appreciated for all that you do around here.

I thank you.

Your gifts, your time, your talents, and your presence, is so appreciated.

Thank you/

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Leanne



SHPC (Birthday) Party Animals



We wish those who celebrate Birthdays in December a Very Happy Birthday and many blessings throughout the year!

* If your name is not listed and you celebrate a birthday in December, please notify the church office so that our records can be updated.

December Birthdays

1 Kathy Campbell

6 Candy McLearn

14 Allison Fortkamp

16 Rachael Phillips

17 Bill Walters

19 Kelly Mertlik

21 Kerrington Joseph

21 Katie Nelsen

30 Leland Stege



Fleece Blanket Tying Project For Foster Care Closet & The Gathering Place



They turned out fantastic!

Thank you.



Christmas Cookie Festival

Sunday, December 10, 2023



One day only! Bring your favorite cookies & treats to share & the SHPC elves will be in the kitchen before worship so you to drop them off.

Takeout boxes will be available so you can try as many as you like.

Sponsored by the Financial Stewardship Committee

Mission Trip to the Dominican Republic

If you are interested in going on a mission trip to the Dominican Republic, please attend a brief informational meeting on Sunday, December 3rd following the worship service.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Leland Stege at 402-474-7936

Fellow Members of Southern Heights,

Our Financial Stewardship Campaign this year has included information about some of the committees of Southern Heights. These committees are made up of members who feel called by God to use their various gifts of the spirit. They take seriously their responsibilities to fulfill their committee goals. These goals include using their budget resources wisely. These are resources you have been led to generously share. Our Southern Heights mission statement to be “Inwardly Strong and Outwardly Focused” is not possible without your support. Our campaign theme for this year is from James 1 verse 17 which says very simply that **“Every good and perfect gift is from above.”**

Every
good & perfect gift
is from above.

James 1:17

The paragraph Financial Stewardship Committee chairman Dick Campbell had in the October Newsletter is so true. What we often don't take time to realize is that Southern Heights is a haven for all of us, whether it be worship, fellowship, participation on committees and making decisions from our involvement that allows our church not only to serve our members but also our outreaches to the Lincoln community and beyond. In an article by E.J. Dionne, he reminds us that “Over the past several months, an old truth has become new again: Houses of worship and other religious institutions play an essential role in promoting social correctness, mutual aid and community building.” And this reaffirms our own statement of being “Inwardly Strong and Outwardly Focused!”

Throughout October and into December we will have given you information on different Southern Heights committees. This article will help you have an appreciation for the leadership and work of the **Worship and Music Committee**. Members of this committee are Sue Babovec, Mary Bell, Music Director and Accompanist Anita Elliott (ex officio), Julie Haberman, Pastor Leanne (ex officio), and Amber Weyer. Their responsibilities include assisting Pastor Leanne with worship planning, providing a variety of worship experiences, recruiting, and scheduling liturgists, recording worship attendance and supporting audio visual volunteers, arranging for supply pastors when Pastor is gone, preparing sanctuary for worship, scheduling communion, and supporting the music ministry. The worship experience you have at Southern Heights would be much less impactful without the guidance and work they do on a regular basis.

As we continue these highlighted and other committees and programs of Southern Heights, the only way they can continue to exist is through your generous support. We urge you to use the Estimate of Giving form for the coming year as accurately as possible.

Please join us as we remind ourselves of all the good our congregation is doing—not only internally, but also externally. Remember that “Every good and perfect gift is from above”, and recognize that God walks with us in our important mission.

The financial Stewardship Committee:

Dick Campbell, Jim Harder, Sam Phillips, Gene Knoche, Carolyn Murphy, and treasurer Stan Fortkamp

Please join us as we remind ourselves of all the good our congregation is doing—not only internally, but also externally.

Thanksgiving Food Baskets

In Proverbs 22:9 it states: “Happy are generous people, because they give some of their food to the poor.”

The Mission Committee would like to would like to say THANK YOU! Because of you, we were able to donate 67 bags of “trimmings” to the People’s City Mission Thanksgiving Food Drive where they were handed out on November 18th. Your generosity of food and funds made it all possible to help support our community.

These Bags were **Full** of the items needed for a great Thanksgiving meal. You have truly made a difference for these 67 families.





Scrip Cards for the Holidays

Plan Ahead — Every Scrip card purchase gives money back to the Youth!

Use Scrip Cards at Your Favorite Merchants

▶ Buy groceries for upcoming:

- Thanksgiving meals
- Christmas dinners
- Ingredients for Christmas Cookie baking
- Even for weekly groceries and monthly prescriptions



- ▶ Take advantage of seasonal Christmas sales
- ▶ Purchase gift cards as stocking stuffers, Teacher gifts, Scout leaders & Secret Santas

How to Buy Scrip Cards ~ 3 Easy Steps

1) The Scrip table is open every Tuesday in Fellowship Hall for 20 minutes following the worship service—OR you can contact Scrip Coordinator, Andy Anderson, to place an order:

aanderson34@neb.rr.com

C: 402-440-5902

2) Andy carries some Scrip cards in stock. If what you want is in-stock, you can pick them up on Tuesdays.

3) Please provide your payment to Andy (checks payable to Scrip).

2024 Ambassador Program



In the fall of 2022 a decision was made to combine the Usher Program with the Ambassador Program starting January 2023. The Membership Committee was asked to implement both programs into one and did so.

This year the Membership Committee has decided to make a change in the Ambassador program starting in 2024. The change is to give our congregation a chance to participate on a weekly basis rather than a monthly one. Currently we have a group of 12 teams who serve for an entire month. Moving forward, our goal is to encourage our members to serve as an Ambassador on a week that fits into their schedule.

Instead of 12 teams, we could have up to 52 teams or more when including special services, giving more members an opportunity to participate. If an individual or team would like to sign up for more than one week, that would be great. They could be spread out or could be for a month. Everything is possible.

Starting November 19th we'll have a sign-up sheet on the information stand in the Narthex. The sign-up sheet will be for the first 3 months of 2024. On December 18th the sign-up sheet will be compiled with each volunteer team and a master schedule will be posted in the Narthex along with a thank you e-mail to each participant. If something comes up and you can't be there for your Sunday, we'll ask you to seek out your own replacement from the congregation.

If you have any questions concerning these changes or would like additional information concerning the Ambassador program, please reach out to Gene Knoche of the Membership committee.

Thank you for your interest and participation.

The Membership Committee

Joyce Schmeckle, Denise Hockamier, Elaine Nelson, Jan & Bob Obst, Shelly Falkinburg, Marci Elam, Gene Knoche

BOOK OF CONFESSIONS STUDY

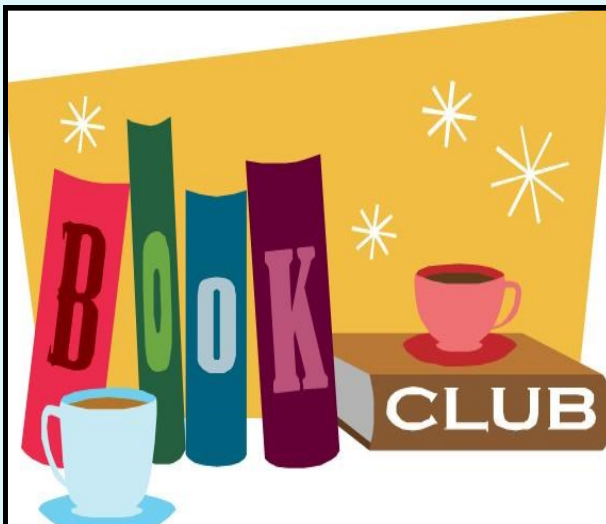
December 17, 2023

Following Worship | 12 noon
in the Conference Room

We will be reading the Barmen Declaration in December



MONTHLY FICTION BOOK CLUB



Saturday, Dec. 16

1:30 pm

at SHPC

We'll discuss:

Lessons in Chemistry

By Bonnie Garmus



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

December 24th, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Sermon: Making A Home

Guest Soloist: Hana T. Will. Guest Pianist: Lisette Parks



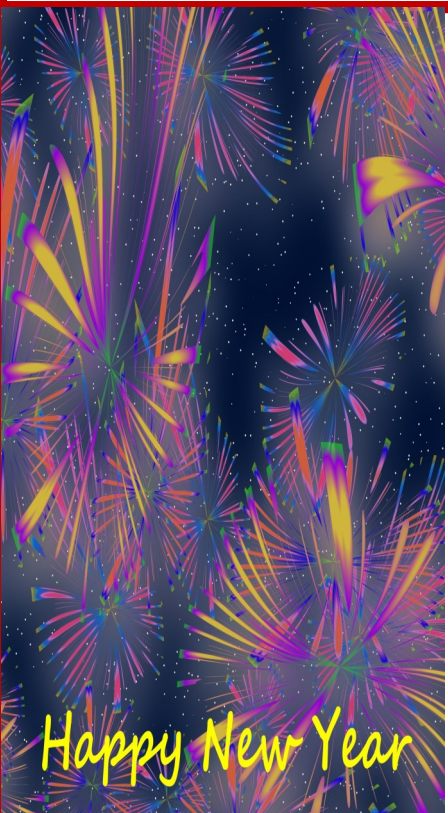
Worship Service

& Birthday Offering Sunday

December 31st, 2023 at 10:30 AM

Guest Pastor: Rev., Sue Babovec

Fellowship to follow at 11:30 AM



New Year's Eve

Bingo Bash!!!

Join us for

Free Bingo, games and prizes as well as
Bottle Water, Coffee and Tea
(weather permitting smores by the firepit)

This is an all ages event, so bring your
friends and family.

On Sunday, December 31st from

7:00– 10:30pm

Feel free to bring snacks to share !

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Drive-thru Living Nativity

Dec. 15 & 16, 2023—6 to 8 pm

Ways to Help Out:

- Assist cast with costume dressing
- Bring/serve food to the cast & crew
- Take a shift portraying one of the Nativity characters
- Set design
- Help with “wrangling” the animals

If you're interested in helping out in any way with this fun & meaningful event, please contact Joyce Schmeackle.



Getting to Know our SHPC Family!

Highlighting individuals within our church family

Sponsored by the Membership Committee



Name: Felicia Nelsen

Church involvement and interests (or how long you have been a member, why you love the church, etc.)

I have been a member of Southern Heights since December 2000 and currently serve on Session as well as the Mission Committee and Life Long Learning. I really enjoy attending all the wonderful activities at SHPC as it is a great way to learn more about others in the church and really be a part of the “church family”.

Family:

I have one daughter, Katie who just graduated from UNL in August. She is a member of SHPC. Both of my sisters are also members of SHPC. My sister Beth has four children Mariah (in Washington), Isaiah, Sabrina, and Quin. My sister Gina has two children, Hannah and Angel. All of the children in our family were adopted out of foster care. Between my sisters and me, we have fostered many kids who became a part of our family even if it was for a short time.

Hometown:

I was born in Dallas Texas but raised in Central City Nebraska. As an adult, I moved to Leawood Kansas for almost 11 years before moving back to Nebraska to reside in Lincoln with my family.

Personal hobbies and other interests:

I love to read (romance books). Very rarely do I not read at least a few pages at the end of the day. As I have gotten older, I mostly read on my IPAD so I can increase the font size of the text! It is also helpful if I have a few minutes during the day to pick up where I left off the day before.

Favorite things (i.e., food, movies, places you have been, etc.)

I love going to the movies as a family, usually Marvel or action. I also love coming home and Zen (Isaiah’s Shih Tzu) and Lu La Bell (Gina’s Morkie) greeting me at the door. It always makes me smile. I love to travel and see new places. San Diego is one of my favorite places to visit and I would live there if I could. My next “big” trip will be taking a train ride in Alaska.

Best piece of advice:

I have always followed the one piece of advice my mother gave. “There is always room for one more”. Whether this was one more at the table or one more foster child in the home (which got very chaotic at some points), this advice was always followed.

A Word from Our Treasurer



We made a nice rebound on general fund giving in October to our best position on giving since early in the year. We are currently at 94% of budget on general fund giving and hopefully with holiday giving will continue this trend until the end of the year. It may also be noted that other income from interest and investments are helping to bolster our total budgeted income receipts.

While our budgeted bottom line is positive by \$6,000, we still have some unrecorded mission expenses for the end of the third quarter. This tends to inflate that bottom line number by about \$3,000.

STIFIT funds are at a low for the year due to HVAC expenditures, and the need to use some of the savings for operations in October. After a second HVAC expense of \$8912 in November, our HVAC fund will be at a low point of \$3310 at the end of November. I remain hopeful that this can meet our goal and have the full \$12,000 in excess cash to bring the HVAC fund back to a more reasonable level of \$15,000. To cover the HVAC expenses on October & November, \$14,777 was moved from the HVAC fund to checking in November.

Treasurer's Report

	<u>Jan - Oct 23</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Over/(Under)</u>
Budgeted Income	245,500.00	238,989.56	(6,510.44)
Budgeted Expenses			
Program Expense			
Mission	16,830.74	19,980.00	(3,149.26)
Life Long Learning	2516.19	5,525.00	(3,008.81)
Worship & Music	2500.47	2,385.00	115.47
Membership	482.51	1,137.50	(654.99)
Total Program Expense	<u>22,329.91</u>	<u>29,027.50</u>	<u>(6,697.59)</u>
Staff Expense			
Salaries	97,478.72	96,768.75	709.97
Benefits & Allowances	47,100.24	48,234.80	(1,134.56)
Expenses & Substitutes	5,077.79	6,299.60	(1,221.81)
Total Staff Expenses	<u>149,656.75</u>	<u>151,303.15</u>	<u>(1,646.40)</u>
Occupancy Expense			
Custodial & Maintenance	23,997.63	25,060.00	(1,062.37)
Utilities	16,287.85	16,930.00	(642.15)
Insurance	49,359.914	49,940.00	(580.09)
Total Occupancy Expenses	<u>89,645.39</u>	<u>91,930.00</u>	<u>(2,284.61)</u>
Office & Other Operating Expenses			
Office Expense	4,133.55	4,890.00	(756.45)
Other Operating Expenses	7,457.08	8,166.00	(708.92)
Total Office/Operating Expenses	<u>11,590.63</u>	<u>13,056.00</u>	<u>(1,465.37)</u>
Total Expenses	<u>232,937.20</u>	<u>243,326.65</u>	<u>(10,389.45)</u>
Budgeted Net Income or (Loss)	<u>6,052.36</u>	<u>2,173.35</u>	<u>3,879.01</u>

December Calendar

Room Key: FH: Fellowship Hall
WW: West Wing

CR: Conference Room
S: Sanctuary

FF (or SHFF): Food Forest
LL-K: Lower Level-Kitchenette

Sunday, Dec. 3

10:30 AM Worship Service
11:30 AM Fellowship Hour / FH

Monday, Dec 4

6:00 PM Mission Committee / WW
6:00 PM Scouts PLC / CR
7:00 PM Scouts BSA / FH

Tuesday, Dec 5

5:30 PM Crocheters

Wednesday, Dec 6

6:30 PM Choir Practice / S

Thursday, Dec 7

9:00 AM International Club / FH
6:30 PM Membership Committee / CR

Friday, Dec 8

7:00 PM Adoptive Moms Support Group / WW

Sunday, Dec 10

10:30 AM Worship- Communion / S
11:30 AM Cookie Sunday / FH (one Sunday only)
5:30-6:30 PM SHYP Youth Club (K-2nd)
5:30-7:30 PM SHYP Youth Club (3rd-12th)

Monday, Dec 11

6:30 PM Personnel Committee / CR
6:30 PM Scouts CoH / FH & S

Tuesday, Dec 12--Newsletter Deadline

7:00 PM Financial Stdshp. Cte. / CR

Wednesday, Dec 13-- Session Reports Due

1:30 PM PW-Esther Circle / FH
6:30 PM Choir Practice. / S

Thursday, Dec 14

3:00 PM Poli Olli / FH
7:00 PM Deacons / S

Friday, Dec 15

6:00 PM Living Nativity

Saturday, Dec 16

1:30 PM Book Club / CR
6:00 PM Living Nativity

Sunday, Dec 17

10:30 AM Worship / S
11:30 AM Fellowship / FH
Noon BOC Study / CR

Monday, Dec 18

7:00 PM Session Meeting / CR

Wednesday, Dec 20

6:30 PM Choir / S

Thursday, Dec 21

8:30 AM—4PM WIC Clinic / LL-K
7:00 PM Blue Christmas / S

Sunday, Dec 24-Christmas Eve

10:30 AM Worship / S
11:30 AM Fellowship / FH
7:00 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service / S

Monday, Dec 25

Christmas Day—Church Office Closed

Wednesday, Dec 27

6:30 PM Choir Practice / S

Friday, Dec 29

7:00 PM Adoptive Moms Support Group / WW (tentative)

Sunday, Dec 31—Christmas Eve

10:30 AM Worship— Guest Pastor Sue Babovec / S
Birthday Offering Sunday
11:30 AM Fellowship / FH
7:00 PM New Year's Eve Bingo Bash

Southern Heights Presbyterian Church
5750 S. 40th
Lincoln, NE 68516
402-421-3704

Return Service Requested



December 2023

Email Addresses:

Leanne Masters, Pastor: pastor@southernheights.org

Karen Moore, Administrator: karen@southernheights.org



From the Heights

A Monthly Publication of Southern Heights Presbyterian Church

We're on the Web at www.SouthernHeights.org

We welcome your suggestions and contributions to the newsletter. Deadline for each issue is the third Tuesday of each month. It is greatly appreciated if contributions are emailed to the Newsletter Editor: karen@southernheights.org.

Please don't try to structure anything . . . we will format your contribution to fit the newsletter. You may also contact us through the Church office at (402) 421-3704.

Our worship services are on Tuesdays at 10:30 AM. Adult Tuesday school classes are at 9:30 AM from September through May.

Staff: Rev. Leanne Masters, Pastor. Karen Moore, Administrator. Anita Elliott, Music Director. Dr. Ronald L. Bump, Pastor Emeritus.