



From the Heights

**February
2024**

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Pastor’s Message

Dear Church Family,



Change. It’s not just what we get at the store. As mentioned at the congregational meeting on January 21st, we are not the church that we were five years ago, let alone 15 or 25 years ago. Nor are we the same people that we were, or is our world or our society, for that matter, either. We are changed and we are changing... and the reality is that some of the changes in people, communities, cultures and societies that should have been longer acting changes have been accelerated by the shock to the system that our experiences with Covid19 has been. It was a catalyst season that propelled us into a new reality before we really had a chance to acclimatize to it.

One of the hallmarks of the Reformed Faith is that we do not deny those changes, but instead we are constantly asking God to guide us in who and how we are called to be in response to God’s call in and to the world we find ourselves a part of.

Over the past several years, the session at SHPC has been in discernment about the ways that we have changed and are changing as a congregation and as people in the midst of a congregation. One of the results is that we have been evaluating the way that we go about doing the work that we do here, and the work that we hope to do in the future.

One of the ways these conversations is manifesting is taking a look at the committee structure of the church, and seeking to envision a way to streamline it while also finding ways to empower and enable all of us to engage deeply with meaningful work, opening up possibilities for us all to find ways we can use our Gifts, Talents and Skills to serve the people with Energy, Intelligence, Imagination and Love.

None of the work we are doing is being eliminated, we’re simply seeking to approach doing it in a new way.

In this month’s newsletter, you’ll find a draft of the proposed new committee structure, with some of the places where we’re going to locate the work that we do and the types of work we hope to deeply engage in. In the coming weeks, leaders for each of the committees listed will be named and shared with the congregation. We’ll have some time during worship on February 11th to introduce the structure and a congregational Q&A on February 25th during the fellowship hour to answer any questions you may have.

As always, my door and phone line is always open if you have any questions. Change. It’s not just what we get at the store, and sometimes it can be scary. But it doesn’t have to be. We can embrace the change and lean into our Reformed heritage by always being Reformed in and by the Spirit of God to do the work and to be the people God is calling us to be.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Leanne

SHPC (Birthday) Party Animals



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

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

09-Feb Hunter Falkinburg	18-Feb Dale Verhoeff
12-Feb Gary Rucker	19-Feb Val Ryckman
15-Feb Fred Weyer	20-Feb Connor Wilken
17-Feb Nina Gullikson	21-Feb Donna Parks
18-Feb Mary Anderson	24-Feb Marcia Bryan
18-Feb Andy Pool	

*****NEW PUBLISHING DEADLINES*****

**IN AN EFFORT TO TAKE THE GUESS WORK OUT OF WHEN THINGS ARE DUE TO THE
ADMINISTRATOR.**

SESSION REPORTS ARE DUE THE 10TH OF EVERY MONTH

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES ARE DUE THE 15TH OF EVERY MONTH

Please Review the Calendars

The SHPC Calendar can be found on the **Hotline**, Newsletter, **Online**
and in the **Announcement Slides**.

Please contact the church office if anything needs to be
changed or deleted. Thanks!

Join Us For A Life-Changing Christian Mission Trip To The Dominican Republic

A Foundation For Peace Mission Trip gives you the opportunity to work hand in hand with the people of local communities to meet some of their greatest needs. The ability to be God's "hands and feet" can bring hope and lasting change.

A Trip For Everyone

Ages 5 - 70+ We welcome youth groups, families and multi-generational teams. Each trip is tailored to meet the ministry goals and skills of the team members to provide an opportunity for all those who sincerely want to serve others.

Trips With A Purpose

Our trips are planned with local church leaders to maximize the opportunities to engage and serve. Schedules for worship, vacation bible school and other activities are fully prepared in advance.

For more info, contact Leland Stege at (402) 474-7936



PHOTO GALLERY ~ ORDINATION & INSTALLATION

JANUARY 21, 2024

Receive these deacons and elders as Christ's own servants. Support them in love, that their work may bear fruit.







Getting to Know our SHPC Family!

Name: Donna Swoboda

Church involvement and interests

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

My love for SHPC started a Long, long time ago when I was seven, you see I was and still am a product of the COLLEGE VIEW CHURCH...so when I add those together I find I've been blessed for 72 years by all of you.

Family:

Most of my families live in the country & two of them live here in Lincoln. I have a son, daughter, three granddaughters & * 4 great-grand-daughters and the dads to go with them. We have two in heaven Carol-Jean was my first baby, she came too early...then they discovered I was diabetic. Johnathon he was born on May Day, he died 2 days later he was born with only half of his heart.

Hometown:

I was born in the old Saint Elizabeth Hospital. I am telling you the date because it goes along with my story. Snow makes me happy...mom was looking out of the hospital shortly after her delivery. It was snowing on *May the 9th*! Mom grew up in Mississippi. Grampa left to go plant potatoes.

Personal hobbies, favorite things and other interests:

I love to sing even tho' I can't decipher a single note I still love singing & performing with The Sweet Adelines for 30+ years now. I enjoy making the cards for you with all my heart. One of my favorite places to eat is HuHot.

Looking back at this past year my life has changed forever...March 13th God saved me on the operating table...the doctors there with me said I was gone for 10 minutes

Best piece of advice:

GOD IS REAL. THIS I KNOW. AMEN!



Getting to Know our SHPC Family!

Name: Verla M. Swearingin

Church involvement and interests

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

I moved from Fontanelle NE to Lincoln June of 2005, but selling my home in the woods didn't happen till late fall so I had a late start attending Southern Heights. It was late fall when I attended three Sundays in a row. At end of the third

Sunday, I asked the Membership Chairperson about joining the choir. He introduced me to Jane Herriot, the choir director. So, I joined the choir before I transferred my membership from the Fremont Presbyterian Church to Southern Heights on January 15, 2006. Within that year our recently Called Pastor, Bob Snell, asked me to be on the Mission Committee. I was very reluctant. He suggested I "audit" the meetings for a while. I stayed with it until maybe 2018, introducing I've Got A Name to the Committee in 2012. I continue to enjoy participating in Chancel Choir, Heart & Soul Sextet and as an occasional character in the Living Nativity Scene.

My hope is every member can develop Greeter qualities and welcome visitors with meaningful conversation, inviting them into Coffee Time, introducing them to others in the Fellowship Hall, and finding a welcoming table group to sit with and continue the conversations.

Fond memories of past participation in SHPC includes Supper for Several and Monthly Friendship Friday.

Family: As recently as May 2022, I felt blessed to be the middle child of seven siblings, **but** each living in a different state. Then between August 12, 2022 and March 20, 2023, three siblings and two sisters in law passed away in various levels of senior living care. I married twice. Widowed 3-2-1990. I have two children, daughter Jeannene Hansen/CA, son Mark Hansen/Lincoln. Of three Swearingin step daughters, Ann, Martha and Susan, Ann is already deceased. At my age of 91, there is the blessing of many grandchildren, great grandchildren and Steps in those same levels!

Hometown: Born in 1932 on farm in **Saunders County NE**. Church life for me began in the cradle at Marrietta Presbyterian Church, a country church near Colon in Saunders County NE. Thanks to our parents who didn't accept excuses for not attending every Sunday, it stuck with me through the ages. May of 1944 after the two oldest siblings graduated from Mead High School, the folks moved all seven of us kids to **Fremont NE**.

Hometown (cont...): The Pastor Rev. Ralph V. Gilbert welcomed our whole family to The Presbyterian Church, then located at 5th and Union St. I have a vivid memory of him introducing me to the Girls Sunday School Class meeting in the choir loft. In 1944, I was confirmed in that church.

1950-51 **Wayne NE:** Wayne State Teachers College.

1951-52 back to **Fremont** :Midland Lutheran College.

September 1, 1952 First marriage to G.I. Joe attending Midland. All colleges at that time had many veterans about five years older than the high school graduates. Many married veterans lived off campus in G.I. Quonset Huts. Yes, we did too. "When Johnny came marching home" from WW2, he got married, had babies ... giving birth to all the Baby Boomers, filled up the churches!

Hired as Church Secretary, Fall of 1959 through 4-14-63. Resigned, realizing I needed to be home while my two children got a little older.

Hired as Christian Education Coordinator from 11-1-68 to 3-31-74 when my husband's job moved us to North Platte.

Spring of 1976, I moved to **Omaha** where I was sure I could get a church job. I was acquainted with Presbyterian Churches through years of Christian Education meetings. First job opening was in the Presbytery Office ... at a typewriter. Then Rev. Keith Cook, pastor of Presbyterian Church of the Master at 108 & Maple, hired me as Christian Education Coordinator from 8-4-76 to 1-15-81. It was a great move!

When the job opened up back in The Presbyterian Church in Fremont, I applied and was hired again as Christian Education Coordinator from 1-16-81 to 6-30-96. June 30, 1996 was my Retirement Day at age 64.

Throughout my years in Fremont church I was Ordained Deacon and Elder, served on variety of committees for Presbytery and Synod. Served a Term on PCUSA General Assembly Council, ca1999-2002, and that involved being assigned to other committees. One was World Wide Ministries and being asked to join with 24 other Presbyterian Women from all over the U.S. for a month in the Middle East, exploring PW's established Missions. A very exhilarating and eye opening experience!

Personal hobbies, favorite things and other interests:

I've Got A Name active volunteer since 2012.

TeamMate Mentor for eleven years.

Self appointed Caretaker for FHS Class of 1950

Women's Welcome Club in Lincoln.

Attend to my many bird feeders.

Love to travel.

Anything else you would like to share!

I thank God for my parents and the multitude of "shoulders I have stood upon and raised me up through out my life." God is Great!

Use Scrip Cards at Your Favorite Merchants

Buy groceries or as gifts for:

Easter dinners

4th of July celebrations

Regular weekly groceries & monthly prescriptions

Gifts for Teachers, Scout Leaders, Co-workers

How to Buy Scrip Cards

The Scrip table is open every Sunday 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

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

Please make your payment to Andy (checks payable to Scrip).

Every Scrip card purchase gives money back to the Youth!

BOOK OF CONFESSIONS STUDY

February 18, 2024

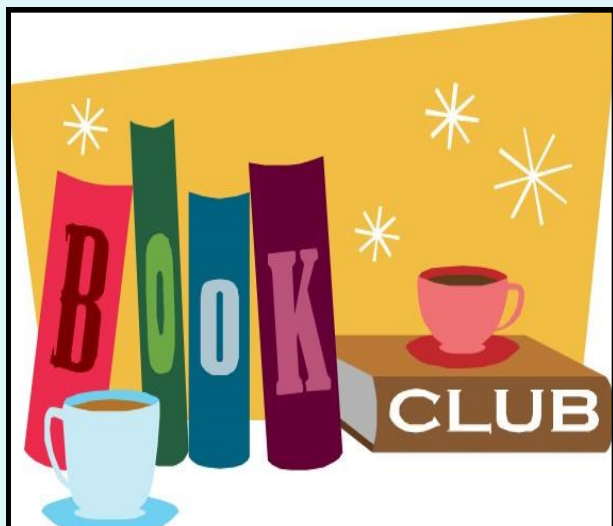
Following Worship | 12 noon

in the Conference Room

February we will be reading The Only One Left by Riley Sager



MONTHLY FICTION BOOK CLUB



Saturday, Feb. 24

1:30 pm

at SHPC

We'll discuss:

Lessons in Chemistry

By Bonnie Garmus

Warm Hands, Warm Hearts

Now thru February 14th

**We are collecting NEW gloves scarves,
hats & mittens**

~in all sizes~

For People's City Mission

For more information, please contact:

Felicia Nelsen at: Felicia@nfapa.org



Proposed Organizational Structure

Concept: Minimize the number of committees and the number of people needed on them, relying on recruited volunteers to accomplish long and short term tasks.

STRUCTURE OF COMMITTEES

Purpose

Cast vision and purpose

Responsibilities/Tasks

Steer the direction of the work

Develop and manage timelines

Recruit volunteers as needed

Membership

4-5 Core Members

Accountability

Committee chair voted on by committee (initially appointed by Session)

Monthly report to Session

Proposed Committees

FAITH FORMATION

Purpose

To provide for opportunities for personal growth and development of faith

Responsibilities

Worship

Ideally: Pastor, Church Musician and one other person to plan and provide for worship

Education

Youth

Adult

Intergenerational

Youth Programming

SHYP

VBS

STEWARDSHIP

Purpose

To develop and encourage stewardship practices in the life of the church

Responsibilities

Finance and Budget

Memorial

Stewardship Programming

Discernment of service

“Campaign”

Education

Where’s the money going? How’s it being used? (Moments for Mission, etc)

Food Forest Relationship

Steering Committee and or Board

Recruiting involvement

Responsibilities

Congregational Programming

Coffee Fellowship

Fellowship Activities

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE***Purpose***

To build and strengthen the SHPC community and relationships within it.

Responsibilities***Congregational Programming***

Coffee Fellowship

Fellowship Activities

Care/Deacon Support

Prayer Team

Welcome

Ambassadors

New Members

MISSION***Purpose***

To communicate and work with groups outside our walls

Responsibilities***Mission***

Relationships

Service Opportunities

ADMINISTRATION***Purpose***

To manage administrative aspects of the life of the congregation

Responsibilities***Personnel******Health and Safety******Kitchen******Facility***

Upkeep and Maintenance

Facility Use

OUTREACH/COMMUNITY AND CONNECTION***Purpose***

To coordinate and manage outreach and connection with the larger community.

Responsibilities***Evangelism***

Advertising

Promotion

Communication

Newsletter

Hotline

Website

Social Media

Event Programming

Outward Facing

Living Nativity

Treasurer's Report

Giving for the last quarter was strong and pushed us past our projected general fund income. Our general fund giving was over budget by \$16,600 for the year, which also allowed us to record a very positive net operating income. Mission giving to various local causes were completed in December matching our goal to use 10% of general funds to mission. Expenses were in line or below projections for 2023. The exception was payroll expense, which was expected with Pam's retirement and the need to train Karen in the position.

We were able to move \$12,000 To HVAC again this year which came close to covering our HVAC expenditures in 2023.

Restricted funds in the STIFIT accounts increased slightly during the year starting at \$159,119 and ending at \$165,070. The Savings account in STIFIT started at negative (\$85) and ended at positive \$9,400. The \$9,400 savings matches a couple of prepaid giving in late 2023 for the new budget year. Overall, major disbursements from the STIFIT funds totaled more than \$31,685--in most part due to a couple of large HVAC replacements and the improvements to the west wing. Most of the other funds in STIFIT remain relatively the same as the start of 2023. STIFIT earnings were up substantially from 2022 due to increases in interest rates. STIFIT interest earnings for 2023 were \$7,712.

Other operating income revenues were above projections. Increased interest and dividends received allowed us to exceed our other income projection by \$5,785. While 2022 saw a decrease in our endowment funds, the value of those funds increased by \$12,165 in 2023. Thanks to Andy Pool for his management of those funds for SHPC to maximize earnings and fund value.

Our financial stewardship campaign for 2024 was about the same as 2023. A total of 37 folks turned in estimates and there were 6 folks who had turned in estimates in the past but did not turn in estimates this year. Based on the estimates received, the projected general fund budget for 2023 will be slightly less than 2022, but still adequate to cover our expected expenses. As in the past, personnel expenses make up a majority of the budget changes. Some operating expenses were revised for the 2024 budget based on prior year experience, but most of the budgeted program expenses remained the same as the previous year.

Respectively submitted:

Stan Fortkamp – Treasurer SHPC

Treasurer's Report

	<u>Jan - Dec 23</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Over/(Under)</u>
Budgeted Income	316,986.72	294,600.00	22,386.72
Budgeted Expenses			
Program Expense			
Mission	27,510.97	26,640.00	870.97
Life Long Learning	2,896.85	5,935.00	(3,038.15)
Worship & Music	2,800.44	2,880.00	(79.56)
Membership	807.91	1,410.00	(602.09)
Total Program Expense	<u>34,016.17</u>	<u>36,865.00</u>	<u>(2,848.83)</u>
Staff Expense			
Salaries	115,194.36	116,463.75	(1,269.39)
Benefits & Allowances	62,261.84	57,881.76	4,380.08
Expenses & Substitutes	6,991.06	7,510.25	(519.19)
Total Staff Expenses	<u>184,447.26</u>	<u>181,855.76</u>	<u>2,591.50</u>
Occupancy Expense			
Custodial & Maintenance	28,225.51	29,980.00	(1,754.49)
Utilities	17,768.47	20,110.00	(2,341.53)
Insurance	10,978.25	9,600.00	1,378.25
Total Occupancy Expenses	<u>56,972.23</u>	<u>59,690.00</u>	<u>(2,717.77)</u>
Office & Other Operating Expenses			
Office Expense	4,687.25	5,875.00	(1,187.75)
Other Operating Expenses	9,641.67	10,314.24	(672.57)
Total Office/Operating Expenses	<u>14,328.92</u>	<u>16,189.24</u>	<u>(1,860.32)</u>
Total Expenses	<u>289,764.58</u>	<u>294,600.00</u>	<u>(4,835.42)</u>
Budgeted Net Income or (Loss)	<u>27,222.14</u>	-	<u>27,222.14</u>

February Calendar

Room Key: FH: Fellowship Hall
WW: West Wing

CR: Conference Room
S: Sanctuary

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

Thursday, Feb 1

6:30 PM Membership Committee / CR

Sunday, Feb 4

10:30 AM Worship / S

11:30 AM Fellowship / FH

Monday, Feb 5

6:00 PM Membership Committee / CR

6:00 PM Personnel Committee / CR

6:00 PM Mission Committee/ WW

7:00 PM Scouts / FH

Tuesday, Feb 6

5:30 PM Crocheters / FH

6:00 PM Life Long Learning

Wednesday, Feb 7

12:30 PM University Faculty Women / FH

6:30 PM Choir Practice / S

Thursday, Feb 8

7:00 PM Deacons / S

Friday, Feb 9

7:00 PM Adoptive Moms / WW

Sunday, Feb 11

10:30 AM Worship / S

11:30 AM Fellowship / FH

11:30 AM SHYP SuperBowl Sunday

Monday, Feb 12

6:30 PM Personnel & Admin Committee Meeting / CR

7:00 PM Scouts / FH

Tuesday, Feb 13

6:00 PM Financial Stewardship Committee Meeting / CR

Wednesday, Feb 14 *****Session Reports Due*****

Ash Wednesday

Valentine's Day

1:30 PM PW—Esther Circle

7:00 PM Ash Wednesday Service

Thursday, Feb 15 *****Newsletter Articles Due*****

8:30 AM—4PM WIC Clinic / LL-K

3:00 PM Poli-Ollie / FH

6:30PM Life Long Learning

Saturday, Feb 17

1:00 PM Food Forest Pruning Class / FH

Sunday, Feb 18

10:30 AM Worship / S

11:30 AM Fellowship / FH

Noon Book of Confessions Study

Monday, Feb 19

President's Day

7:00 PM Scouts / FH

7:00 PM Sessions / CR

Wednesday, Feb 21

6:30 PM Choir Practice / S

Thursday, Feb 22

6:30 PM Worship & Music / S

Saturday, Feb 24

1:30 PM Fiction Book Club

Sunday, Feb 25

10:30 AM Worship / S

11:30 AM Fellowship / FH Congregational Q & A

5:30 PM SHYP 3rd—12th grade

Monday, Feb 26

7:00 PM Scouts / FH

Wednesday, Feb 28

6:30 PM Choir Practice / S

Thursday, Feb 29

9:00 AM International Club / FH

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

Return Service Requested

*Happy
Valentine's
Day*

February 2024

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 Sundays at 10:30 AM. Adult Sunday 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.