



The Flame

October 2025

Our Mission is to be a welcoming place where people meet Christ and grow in their relationship with God through our worship, service, and fellowship.

Great news! Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit, Bellevue is excited to announce our new Rector, Rev Margaret Brack! Mtr Margaret will hold her weekend services starting November 1st- All Saints Day! The vestry, search committee, and the bishop are all thrilled to welcome Mtr Margaret to our church home.

Mother Margaret

Our new Rector, The Reverend Margaret Brack likes to say that she "comes" from the United States. She was born in Washington, D.C. began grade school in Virginia, went to Jr. & Sr. high in Minnesota, then attended college in California and then continued her studies in Maryland. On the way to the east coast, she stopped off at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, MS for five months to do a musical and teach an advanced aerobics class. This is how she joins the many people in her family who served in the Air Force! Her husband, father, grandfather, brother, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, cousins and son have all served in the Air Force. In fact, no one in her family has served in another branch of the military and that's why she calls them an "Air Force family". Mother Margaret and her husband, Jim, have been married for 37 years and have four children: Joshua, Riley, Peter and Anne Marie, and one grandchild, Penelope. Most of them live in Grand Forks, ND with the exception of Anne Marie, who lives in Thief River Falls, MN and Riley who lives in Gainesville, FL where he is doing his M.A. at Univ. of Florida and teaches in its UF Middle School.



Mother Margaret studied opera at the Brooklyn Conservatory and has a B.A. in Religious Studies, with a minor in Cello Performance from the Notre Dame Univ. of MD. After graduating she went on to be the Campus Minister. She has a M.A in Vocal Performance & Pedagogy from the Univ. of MD, College Park and a Master of Divinity from the Nashotah House Theological Seminary in WI. She is currently completing a D.Min. in Labyrinth Ministry from the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, CA. Before Mother Margaret became Episcopalian in 2009, she worked for the Roman Catholic Church as a liturgist and a director of music ministries, serving nationally for choir directors and regionally for organists. Mother Margaret is currently part of the Yale University Center for Public Theology and Public Policy. She is very active in Creation Care and served on the Presiding Bishop's United Nations delegation

to COP29. Mother Margaret is also a Climate Ambassador for the U.S. and is featured in a video that will be distributed to all Episcopal Churches as part of an education program on the environment in 2026. She has podcasts that tell stories of the presence of holiness in our lives and how grace is prominent all around us! She loves art, poetry, music, and travel

Mother Margaret is very excited to come to Nebraska! She has lived all around the perimeter of the United States and finally has arrived at her home in the center of it all! "The ministry and outreach of the Church of the Holy Spirit is so Christ-filled and active in Jesus' steps! I am so excited to be here and share in this journey with all of you. I feel truly blessed that God has called me here."

Senior Warden's Tidbits



As many of you know, I went on the Celtic Pilgrimage through Scotland and England. We had 17 people from across the diocese. Fr. Tom did a great job leading us. He not only negotiated our stops before we went, but he led us in regular worship. This was a deeply meaningful experience for me. I met God at the 'end of the world' on the island of Iona. I also was totally awed by God's majesty in the magnificent Minster of York. (Giant Cathedral!) I also found joy in the fellowship with like-minded Christians. There is value in spending time being able to discuss how God relates or is part of our everyday life. Finally, I could feel the love ancient people had for God expressed through the stones of the ruins of cathedrals and abbeys from long ago. I felt a part of a great continuum. Thank you everyone who prayed for us.

Meanwhile, you all faithfully kept everything running well. Thank you to those who may have had to step in and help while Dean, Joan, Doug, and myself were gone. I appreciate all the labor put into the process of cleaning the carpets in the office wing. They look wonderful! Please continue to stand strong supporting our parish, and thereby God's people at large. I think a parish that has maintained all of the programs and services between rectors will look inviting to rector candidates. Thank you especially to Corey Hausman who has stepped into the lead role for the food pantry. Many families in our community would go without if this program stopped.

As we approach the busy holiday season, please reflect and pray about what God is calling you to be in our congregation. We will be talking about tithing Time, Talents, and Treasure. I would like you to think about where your resources and passions intersect the church's deep need. No one does a ministry by themselves. Jesus sent disciples out in 2's & 3's! I thank you now for all you have shared and all you will share in the future. Our church family is a loving, safe place for meeting God and nurturing the world.

Yours in Christ, Cindy Pekarek

Ministry Profile

Acolytes

The Acolyte Ministry is important because the Acolytes not only lead the congregation during the service, but the Ministry also offers children and youth an opportunity to get involved in the work of the church and to feel they can make a positive contribution.

Our church has discovered that having a well-established acolyte program not only renders a better service to its congregation, but it is also laying a foundation, so that those who are serving as acolytes may have a closer relationship with their church and God as they reach adulthood. They will bring with them pleasant memories of their servant ministry from their childhood.



FOR MORE INFO:

If you desire to be an acolyte or have questions about this ministry, please contact Deacon Ted Powell at the church.

Deacons Corner

“I tell you, on the day of judgment, people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”
Matthew 12:36-37

As we journey through life, we often overlook the power our words hold. The Bible speaks clearly about the significance of what we say. Words have the capability to uplift, encourage, and inspire, but they can just as easily tear down and harm. We are reminded that our words should reflect love and kindness instead of negativity and criticism. Speaking ill of others not only reflects poorly on us but can also bring harm to our relationships. Our mission, as guided by Scripture, is to speak truthfully and kindly, reflecting the love of Christ in our interactions with others.



The events of mid-September have brought out the best in us and the worst in us. We know that it is easy to slip into speaking ill of others, especially during discussions filled with strong opinions. Yet, as we grow in our walk with Christ, we are encouraged to choose kindness over criticism. This choice is not always easy, but it leads to a more loving and peaceful community. When we decide to be gentle in our words and considerate in our thoughts, we reflect the heart of Jesus. Let us remember that our words can build unity and understanding among us, rather than division and discord.

Another thing that I have recently witnessed is victim blaming, which is a problem that has existed for centuries. The Ukrainian girl on the train and the activist at a Utah university both fell into this situation. When someone suffers harm, instead of offering compassion, people sometimes ask, “What did they do to deserve it?” This talk was rampant on the Internet.

Sadly, victim blaming happens in families, workplaces, churches, and communities. It is often used to avoid responsibility, ignore injustice, or maintain power. One of the most powerful examples of victim blaming in the Bible is found in the book of Job. Job was a righteous man who suffered great loss—his children died, his health failed, and his possessions were destroyed. Instead of comforting him, Job’s friends assumed he must have done something wrong. Job 4:7-8 records one of his friends, Eliphaz, saying: “Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed? As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it.” Eliphaz believed that if Job was suffering, he must have deserved it.

His words reflected a common but false belief—that bad things only happen to bad people. This is the core of victim blaming. It assumes that if someone suffers, they must have done something to cause it. Instead of assuming people deserve their pain or even death, we should listen, show compassion, and support them.

Deacon Ted

Outreach

Mobile Food Pantry

While our September Food Pantry had beautiful weather, the turnout was not as high as we would like. Still we were able to give fresh grapes along with the usage fresh and staple boxes.

Our next pantry is November 15th, please let those in need know.



Robert's Ramblings – Periodic Platitudes from Fr. Bob



Fall is in the air. The 'Dog Days' of Summer (so-named by the Romans after the bright 'dog star' Sirius) are now behind us. Autumn is my favorite season despite allergies that plague many of us. For me the good outweighs the bad. Autumn recalls nostalgic childhood memories. Cool, crisp, hazy days, colorful changing leaves, raking them up with my dad while my spaniel puppy, Laddie, romped through the leaf piles I so carefully put together. One of my best recollections was when we burned those leaves. Supposedly, odor can trigger memories. I believe it! Back then it was legal to burn leaves in the open air, and we lived on a rural acreage anyway. So we stuffed them in an incinerator and lit it up. The smells! I loved the scent of those burning leaves. Even today nostalgia brings tears of happy memories. Other autumnal recollections include jack-o-lanterns, trick-or-treating, Halloween get-togethers, though it wasn't a month-long 'season' like it is now. Thanksgiving family gatherings, holiday feasting, thematically bookended the Fall season.

We have many Fall activities right here at CHS, including:

- 1) Blessing of the Animals, Sunday October 5, 2pm in the parking lot, weather permitting. If inclement, it will be held inside. Pet blessings are traditionally held around St. Francis Day (October 4, commemorating Francis' death in 1226), the patron Saint of animals and the environment, founder of the Franciscan Order. Your creatures are welcome to be blessed. Animal and human refreshments will be served.
- 2) Oktoberfest, October 17, 7pm, Parish Hall. Several course dinner, fellowship, bingo, lots of prizes!
- 3) The annual visit to Bellevue Pumpkin Patch is Sunday, October 12 at 6:30pm.
- 4) Halloween does not go unnoticed at CHS. On Sunday, October 26, Trunk or Treat will be in the parking lot. Decorate your vehicles, bring treats on this festive occasion when neighborhood Trick or Treaters will descend on our premises. Games and refreshments are in the Parish Hall.
- 5) All Saints' Sunday falls on November 2, recognizing the faithful departed.
- 6) Family Advent Workshop creates wreaths, ornaments, etc., on November 23, after the 9:30 service.
- 7) Thanksgiving Eve service, Wednesday, November 26, 6:30pm. Afterward, the 'Greening' of the church decorates our worship spaces for Advent, beginning on November 30. Pies are served in the Parish Hall.

Throughout the Fall the nave and sanctuary will reflect an autumnal, harvest theme. The complete Fall calendar is available elsewhere in this edition of The Flame.

With thankful heart, Fr. Bob

Outreach cont.

Stockings for Service People

We are making stockings to send to service people stationed overseas who will not be home for Christmas. Each year we will try to find someone in the Parish who knows of servicemen in that position. This year stockings will go to crewmembers aboard the USS Gerald R Ford. Kristi's grandson is on that ship. He will help us with distribution. They will have been out six months at Christmas so let's give them some much needed Christmas Spirit. Of course we cannot serve the whole ship. We will use the names we are given. These young sailors are far from home and everything they know and love is back in the states. Some have no family. Our goal is to bring some Christmas spirit and love into their lives.



Our next decorating/sewing Saturday is October 11. The boxes need to be in the mail by 10 November.

This is a Women of Spirit project, but we invite anyone who would like to help. This is one way we are thanking the men and women who protect us every day. If you have any questions contact Kristi Smith 402-359-7524

Moving Veterans Forward

For the past six years, members of the Church of the Holy Spirit have generously supported Moving Veterans Forward. MVF is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization in Sarpy County that provides furniture and household items free of charge to homeless veterans placed in housing by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs throughout the metro area.



Cash donations will be used to purchase as many of the items requested as funds allow. This year's items needed include: hand mixers, alarm clocks, small coffee makers, bed blankets (twin, double or queen size), bathroom hand towels, 13-gallon bathroom trash cans, kitchen dish towel sets, ice cube trays, can openers, vegetable peelers, plastic measuring cup sets, and laundry baskets

The fund-raising effort begins October 6 and runs through October 11. Donations of any size are most welcomed. Please note MVF on the memo line of your check or use a contribution envelope. If you have any questions about this program, please contact the CHS office or Ministry Team leader Nancy Baxter.

Thanksgiving Baskets

Our annual ingathering for Thanksgiving Baskets will take place beginning toward end this month and end the second week in November. Please watch the Spark for more information

Parish Life



This annual adults only event is right around the corner. We will enjoy German inspired food, play three games of bingo, and enjoy two rounds of trivia. If you have not yet purchased your ticket for Oktoberfest, October 17 beginning at 7pm, please see Casey or call the office to see if there are any open seats remaining. Ticket cost is \$12.50 per person.

Bread Needed!

Communion Bread is baked by members of our parish. We are still in need of bakers for November and December. A recipe can be found on the bulletin board outside the office. If you are hesitant, rest assured, the recipe provided is simple and easy to follow. A sign-up sheet is located at the Spirit Hub.



COLLEGE BOXES

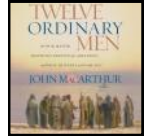


The Daughters of the King would be delighted to send your college student a box with snacks and a message from the church as final exams approach this fall!

If your student would like to participate and receive a College Box, please contact Jean by phone or email to confirm your student's correct address at school.

Christian Education

Adult Christian Education has started after the 9:30am service. Please join Deacon Ted while he leads discussions about the book "Twelve Good Men." This is a neat way to look at the 12 disciples of Jesus. Please stop in the conference room any Sunday. There will be more programs later this year. As adults, we can always use help with our walk with God and the companionship of other believers on our journey.



Welcome back to Christian Education this fall! We started the kids program learning about how we are wonderfully and carefully made, just like all of God's creation. We then learned about Cain and Abel and wondered why things went so wrong. We brain-stormed ideas we could use in our own lives to promote unity and care. Jean Cook is returning to teach the older 2nd-5th graders. Lisa (Weilandt) Stevens is returning as our Little's (3yrs-1st grade) teacher. Jon Nelson, Lori Stevens, and Ali Clark will each be classroom helpers off & on. Anyone else who is interested in subbing or helping with special events, please let one of us know. I will be at coffee hour most weeks so we will be short an adult. Paige Hausman has generously offered to head up the Nativity Play this year so lots of thanks and prayers for her! The Sunday School staff and the congregation will be there to support her. Please support our children and staff with your prayers and encouragement as we learn to walk with God this year.

Trunk or Treat

It is that time of year again. With our community numbers increasing every year, and what a blessing that is, we need to begin planning early. A couple of sign-up sheets are located at the Spirit Hub. One sign-up sheet is for those who will park their cars and handout candy in the parking lot, and the other is for volunteers to help us with the indoor games. Please sign up early and let us know how you can help with this year's event on Sunday October 26 between 3-5pm.



Youth Activities

Scouts

Troop 483(B/G) which is sponsored by Church of the Holy Spirit is happy to announce we have two new Eagle Scouts.

Taegan McCormick earned his Eagle Rank on 08/12/2025. Taegan's Eagle Project was cleaning out the tree and planting hostas' on the westside of the church, so light can pass thru the stain glass windows. Taegan recently graduated from Bellevue East High School with plans on going to college with the goal of becoming a youth minister.

Isaiah Horejs earned his Eagle Rank on 08/06/2025. Isaiah's Eagle Project was planting two trees and multiple bushes in the circle drive. Isaiah is a Senior at Papillion LaVista High School. Isaiah plans to be active in the multiple youth groups he currently attends plus additional sports in the Special Olympics.

Both plan on continuing Scouts as Leaders in the future so they can pass on the skills they have learned during their Scout Journey.



Bellevue Berry Farm

This year's family outing to the Berry Farm is Sunday, October 12. Our youth, their family, and friends, are meeting at the Bellevue Berry Farm beginning at 6:00pm for a campfire (beginning at 6:30pm) and a haunted hayride through the Ranch of Terror (after it gets dark). Cost is \$10 for parish youth 10-18 and \$15 for friends and family who pre-register. Cost at the gate is \$20.



Celtic Pilgrimage August 22-September 5th, 2025

We had 4 of our parishioners, Doug Adams, Cindy Pekarek, Dean & Joan Olander joined 13 other Nebraska Episcopalians to make a Celtic Pilgrimage with Fr. Tom. We visited many holy sites in southern Scotland and northern England. There were so many cathedrals! Some of the buildings and ruins were from the 7th century! We were led by a knowledgeable Bishop of the Anglican church of England, Bishop John Pritchard. Bishop John was a wonderful traveling companion and leader. We were asked to think of a few things that were most memorable or important about our trip. Below are the answers from the 3 people that went from Holy Spirit.

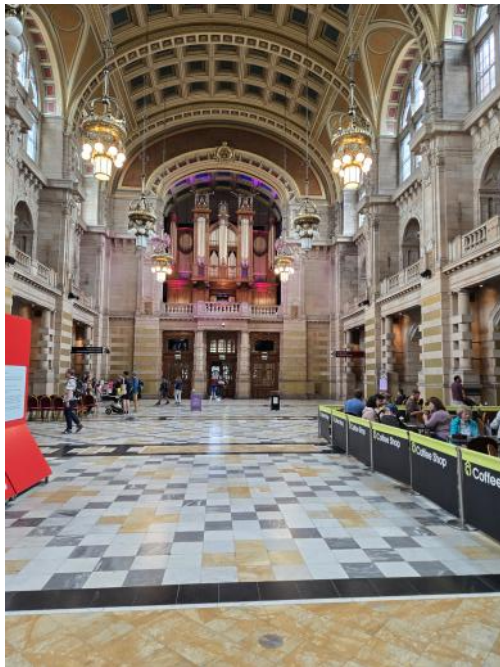
Cindy: I was deeply moved by the island of Iona in Scotland. It is said to be a 'thin place' between this world and the next. It felt like I was meeting God at the end of the world. It was a very peaceful, (if windy!) place. Christians have been worshipping on this tiny island since St. Columba arrived there in the 7th century! Another impression of God was at the York Minster (cathedral) in York, England. Walking into this magnificent cathedral gave me a feeling of how big and grand God is. I really felt his power & majesty reflected in the white walls, arches, and gold accents. It was amazing!

Joan & Dean:

- collegial atmosphere among all tour members
- Bishop (ret) John's knowledge of history of places visited
- In Glasgow the visit to Kelvingrove gallery whose highlights were the organ recital and Dali's Christ of John's painting
- The bus trip on Mull on a one lane road and how all drivers were so accommodating to each other and sheep and cows weren't bothered by the traffic
- The evening services on Iona and the numbers of people attending each service.
- Tours by Domenic of York Cathedral and the history he provided of many areas
- The construction of abbeys, cathedrals and churches that have weathered the elements and German bombing
- Impact a number of cities had on J. K. Rowling in the Harry Potter books and movies
- Sheep, sheep everywhere but not on many menu's



More from our Celtic Pilgrimage



Vestry Meeting Minutes Sept. 18, 2025

Present: Cindy Pekarek, Judy Darrell, Brian Caskie, Margie Guy, Barb Smith, Vince Cummings Jr., Rick Horejs, Patrick Howell, Fr. Bob Schlismann Excused: Marcia Adams Recorder: Jenn Moffett

Opening Prayer

The meeting opened with a prayer based on Proverbs 16:9, led by Judy Darrell.

Treasurer's Report / Finances

Presented by: Judy Darrell (on behalf of Marcia Adams)

- Operating Expense Review: Pledge income has dipped to 97% of the budget. A biannual insurance liability expense of \$4,457.25 was paid. All other expenditures are within expected limits.
- Changes in Equity: Expenditures from designated funds were reviewed and confirmed:
 - o Building & Grounds: Office chair and mouse pad – \$169.85
 - o Youth Missions: Stockholder's Dinner – \$100.50
 - o Outreach Misc: Fr. Tom retirement gifts – \$50.28
 - o Scholarship: Isaiah Hagen – \$1,000.00
 - o Outreach: Pilgrimage donation – \$200.00
 - o Special Fund: A/C repair and replacement – \$17,348.00
- Financial Position:
 - o Total Assets: \$716,000
 - o Checking & Savings Total: \$242,000
 - o Outstanding Checks (as of 08/31/2025): \$7,141.62
 - § 34413 \$1,805.00
 - § 34431 \$100.50
 - § 34436 \$78.65

Motions:

- M010918 – Motion to accept the finance reports made by Patrick Howell, seconded by Brian Caskie. Motion carried.
- M020918 – Motion to pay the bills made by Patrick Howell, seconded by Judy Darrell. Motion carried.

Upcoming Events

- September 27 – Mobile Food Pantry
- October 3 – WOS First Friday Lunch
- October 5 – Pet Blessing
- October 12 – Finance Committee
- October 16 – Next Vestry Meeting
- October 23–25 – Annual Council
- October 26 – Trunk-or-Treat

Discussion Items / Updates

Carpet Cleaning & Office Reorganization

Judy reported that carpets in the administrative wing were cleaned for \$305 by Captain Cleaners (50% discount for church). M030918 – Motion to approve carpet cleaning expenditure made by Margie Guy, seconded by Rick Horejs. Motion carried.

Corey Hagen, the financial secretary, was moved to the copy room to provide the deacons a private office. Concerns were raised about finance computer security. The Vestry agreed to monitor and revisit the arrangement if needed.

tion is encouraged.

2026 Budget Presentation

Presented by: Cindy Pekarek

Cindy reviewed the draft 2026 budget, based on August YTD data and a 3% increase from the 2025 budget. The projected surplus of \$49,000 is attributed to reduced clergy costs during the interim period. Ministry budget requests are due by October 5.

Fr. Bob Schlismann's Compensation Request

Fr. Bob requested an increase from 1/3 time to 1/2 time pay based on an average 30-hour work week.

M040918 – Motion to table the compensation adjustment pending consultation with the diocesan financial officer. Motion by Patrick Howell, seconded by Margie Guy. Motion carried.

Decision Items

Issuance of Call to Rev. Margaret Brack

Following the meeting, a motion was presented by email:

M050918 – Motion by Cindy Pekarek, no second- straight to vote, to issue a call to Rev. Margaret Brack as our Rector.

Action Item: A unanimous yes vote was received via email from all Vestry members. Motion carried.

Other Items for the Good of the Order

- Training Opportunity – Jenn Moffett shared information on a suicide prevention training hosted by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention on October 17. She offered to cover the cost for CHS attendees.
- Building & Grounds Leadership – Chris and Dean will step down after 15 years. Leadership transition planning is underway. Doug Chism has joined the ministry.
- Stewardship Campaign – Begins October 1. Pledge cards will be distributed in person through October 22.
- Organist Coverage – Interim arrangements continue in Grace's absence.

Adjournment

M060918 – Motion to adjourn made by Brian Caskie, seconded by Rick Horejs. Motion carried.

Closing Prayer

The meeting concluded with a prayer for continued grace, integrity, and discernment.

Next Regular Vestry Meeting—October 16, 2025 – 6:30 PM

FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial Report as of August 31, 2025

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD Actual</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
Pledged	\$ 13,448.00	\$ 18,297.58	\$ 140,380.67	\$ 146,380.67
Other Inc.	\$ <u>0.00</u>	\$ <u>2,394.67</u>	\$ <u>16,453.47</u>	\$ <u>19,157.33</u>
Total Inc	\$ 13,448.00	\$ 20,692.25	\$ 156,993.47	\$ 165,538.00
Expenses	\$ 12,014.31	\$ 21,126.83	\$ <u>144,727.62</u>	\$ 169,014.67
			\$ 12,265.85	



UPCOMING PARISH EVENTS!

- Oct 03 - First Friday Sack Lunch - noon
- Oct 05 - Pet Blessing - 2pm
- Oct 11 - Stockings for Service People—1pm to 4pm
- Oct 12 - Bellevue Berry Farm - 6:30pm
- Oct 17 - Octoberfest - 7pm
- Oct 12 - Finance Committee Meeting - 11am
- Oct 16 - Vestry Meeting - 6:30pm
- Oct 23 - 25 - Annual Council Meeting
- Oct 26 - Trunk or Treat - 2pm



LAY MINISTRIES SCHEDULE

Ministries	Oct 5	Oct 12	Oct 19	Oct 26
VPOD	Vince C	Cindy P	Judy D	Margie C
Hospitality Team 9:30 am <i>Greeters ,Ushers & Coffee Hour Host</i>	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 1
Altar Guild	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Team 1
Spirit Hub	Altar Guild	Acolytes	Food for sick	Bell Choir
Altar Bread	Leslie N	Leslie N	Leslie N	Leslie N
Recycle Team	Jan S	Marcia A	Susan H	Karen G
LEM Saturday 5:00 pm	Toby W / Kathy B	Charlotte A	Amber H	Kristi S
LEM Sunday 8:00 am	Cindy P	Doug A	Cindy P	Doug A
LEM Sunday 9:30 am	Jan S Carol S	Michele H Vince C	Jen W Brian C	Grace W Lori E
LEV	Team 2	Team 3	Team 1	Team 2
Acolytes Crucifer Torch Torch	Olivia H MacKenzie C Ailynn M	Isaiah JH Amanda N Evelynn C	Vincent C Cadence K Mya H	Isaiah CH Evelynn C Kyper M

Please submit articles for the November 2025 FLAME to the church office by October 20th.

Thank you



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Regular Services:

Sunday: 8:00am Holy Eucharist Rite I
9:30 am Holy Eucharist Rite II *
Wednesday 9:30 am Holy Eucharist*
Saturday: 5:00 pm Holy Eucharist
* Broadcast live on Facebook

Education: September - May

Sunday: Sunday School @ 10:45 am
Wednesday: Bible Study @ 10:15 am

Office Hours:

Monday – Thursday: 9:00 am–1:00 pm
Friday: 9:00 am–Noon

Rector's Day Off:

The Flame is a monthly production of the Church of the Holy Spirit, Episcopal, in Bellevue, Nebraska. We welcome all stories, pictures, and suggestions, but must reserve the right to choose what we can print. Please send articles and pictures to CHS Admin at holyspirit@chsepiscopal.org. The next deadline for submitting news is October 20th.

Webpage: www.chsepiscopal.org

Email: holyspirit@chsepiscopal.org

The Flame
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1305 Thomas Drive
Bellevue, NE 68005-2973
402-291-7732