



April 2024



Pastor Ron Dahle

GOOD NEWS

From Pastor Ron Dahle

The Resurrection of Our Lord

We are now into the Easter Season on the Church Calendar. This is a great time in the church year. Everything that Jesus came for has been accomplished, except for the Ascension. We now have every opportunity to have the brokenness of sin reversed. To be sure, our physical nature still has to deal with the effects of sin, but our spiritual relationship with God has been completed. God does this through the giving of the Holy Spirit, to soften up our hard-heartedness, to grant us the gift of faith. Ephesians 2:8-9 reveals the extent of God's grace to us. *"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."*

This is pure gift! For this we thank and praise God. We are then prepared to serve God by loving others as God has chosen to love us, and to serve others with this good news!

On the Church Calendar, there are 6 Sundays of Easter. So expect to hear all about what the Gospel writers have to say about this marvelous gift – the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. But one thing we must also keep in mind is that the process is not complete until the Ascension of Jesus. Jesus explains this for us in this teaching to the disciples, and to us, about the gift of the Holy Spirit. Read the 16th chapter of John. Jesus has a complete explanation about when the Holy Spirit comes and what will be accomplished with this gift.

It is my hope and prayer that each one of us will be blessed during this season. To come to faith is to give your life over to God. God will lead you and guide you as you continue your journey through the 'wilderness' of this world, and bring us to the promised land when the time is ready.

Once again, the church calendar is an easy format to strengthen your spiritual journey through life. It has been prepared for us during centuries of experience. We do not need to re-invent a process. I find it useful and refreshing. I hope you do as well.

(continued on page 4)

EVENTS

Monday, April 1
Easter Monday
Office Closed

Wednesday, April 3
WOW Resumes
5:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 6
Quilting Group
9:00 a.m.

Tuesday, April 9
Amazing Grays
6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 17
Last Bethel Bible Series until Fall
6:15 p.m.

Friday, April 19
Pinochle Night
6:00 p.m.

Executive Director of Ministries Doug Leet

Unity in Christ

There is a divine goodness in the variety of God’s creation. Repeatedly, during the days of creation as recorded in Genesis, God examined what he had spoken into existence, “And saw that it was good.” Especially when man, male and female, were added to his creation, “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was *very good*. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.” (emphasis mine) Genesis 1:31.

Charity used to have a sign made of wooden cutout letters that said, “Charity Lutheran” and was affixed to the diagonal retaining wall that’s on the corner of Washington Street and Aspen Avenue. Early on in my employment at Charity, I was informed that there had been discussion when it was installed whether to leave the “Lutheran” part off to attract more people. Another current observation I have in following the Facebook page “Bismarck’s People Reporting News,” is that periodically someone will pose a question about where to go to church. Invariably, there will be several comments touting “non-denominational” as a selling point to visit their church. Interestingly, that comment shows up at times even when their church happens to be a member of a denomination! And there are those that say that denominations are obsolete and have outlived their purpose due to changing demographics, technology, and what seems to be dying mainline denominations.

There is evidence of major challenges over the past decades including declining attendance, more of the younger generation staying away and classified as so-called “nones” listing no affiliation, fewer people being called into pastoral ministry, etc. This is happening not only denominationally, but churchwide.



Doug Leet

These feelings are understandable, as many people have lived experiences with churches, whether from conflict and division within or between churches, experiences with the heavy-handedness of denominational hierarchy, or just plain having bad experiences with people or clergy in the church.

The Body of Christ is made up of all believers...the universal church. We can expect that there will be no denominations in heaven, and as believers, we will have perfect unity in Christ. But on this side of eternity, the Body of Christ is still made up of a fallen humanity and different interpretations of theology and doctrinal differences will continue. This fact does not mean there needs to be disunity and disconnectedness. C.S. Lewis attempted to show this when he focused on the core beliefs that all Christians hold in his book of common, or “mere” Christianity. There have been, and will continue to be, churches that practice ecumenism across denominations.

(continued on page 4)

Financial Report

Feb. Actual Income	\$49,914
Feb. Budgeted Income	<u>\$58,750</u>
Difference	\$8,836
Feb. Actual Income	\$49,914
Feb. Actual Expenses	<u>\$42,091</u>
Difference	\$7,823
YTD Actual Income	\$102,488
YTD Budgeted Income	<u>\$115,900</u>
Difference	\$13,412
YTD Actual Income	\$102,488
YTD Actual Expenses	<u>\$83,583</u>
Difference	\$18,905

Memorials & Gifts

General Fund

In Memory of Paul Kuetemeyer - Ken & Julie Slag

Memorials

In Memory of Audrey Liudahl by Duane & Darlene Bentz, Mark & Lisa Aamodt, Georgia Kingsbury, Doug & Rhonda Leet, Ione Leet, Arlan & Linda Okerson, Ken & Julie Slag, Mike & Judy Smith, Jerry & Renee Walz, Kathy Wermager.

In Memory of Michael Lesmeister - Wayne & Marie Levang, Ken & Julie Slag, Randy & Shelley Traynor

In Memory of Jeff Monthye - Randy & Shelley Traynor

In Memory of Marlene Knutson - Randy & Shelley Traynor

Vision Council Update

Greetings from the Vision Council. During this season of Easter, I do hope that His gift of salvation and hope resonates in all of our hearts and remains throughout the year.

I am pleased to announce that Amber Torgerson is our newest member of the Vision Council. A council member resigned in January and Amber has been appointed to serve the remainder of the term. I want to thank her for taking this service on and all of the Council looks forward to working with her. Please hold her up in prayer and encourage her with your thanks when you see her.

The Vision Council would also like to recognize Audrey Liudahl and her family. While we offer condolences with her passing, we want to thank her and her family in the very generous donation she has made to Charity Lutheran this year and continuing for the next ten years. She has been a blessing to our church for many years in her faithful service, prayers, and giving. Thank you, Audrey and family.

We also received a brief update from the Call Committee during our March meeting. I will leave the details for them to update in their news articles but they are certainly engaged and active in their pursuit of our next shepherd. We are very supportive of all their activities to date and just want to encourage everyone to support them in prayer and encourage them at every opportunity. Pray against discouragement and frustration. These things are not from our Father. We must support and encourage each other as we wait for His timing.

The Vision Council members would also like to give a big thank you to Carol Simenson for her short presentation and thoughts about our core ministry organization. She obviously had put a lot of time and thought into it and we very much appreciate the help and insight into moving this process forward. Thank you, Carol.

I will close as always with a reminder and invitation to corporate prayer every Tuesday at 6:30 PM.

God Bless
Mike Fluharty
Vision Council President

Vision Council questions can be emailed to:
vision.council@charitylutheran.org

Corporate Prayer

Corporate Prayer will be held Tuesday nights from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. We would love to fill the sanctuary with those coming to pray, however even two is good because Matthew 18:20 states *"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."*



From Pastor Ron Dahle

(continued from page 1)

Online, you can find a complete daily reading if you don't already have a guide. May God bless you as you celebrate with the body of Christ – the Church – the living Lord.

-Pastor Ron Dahle

Unity in Christ

(continued from page 2)

Can churches of differing denominations still proclaim the Gospel of Christ and continue to be His “witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”? (Acts 8:1) Absolutely! And to paraphrase a pastor we all know and love, (including his guitar playing), “Some denominations may be able to witness to some people more effectively, while other denominations are able to reach others.”

This brings me back to the first paragraph of this article, along with the photo of the tree that’s included. This small banner has been hanging in Charity’s office since who knows when. It was explained to me that the tree trunk represents “Unity in Christ” while the many varied leaves represent the different giftings given to believers in the Body of Christ. I believe this holds true to the many varied denominations as well. What a beautiful variety God has created. Certainly, in nature, and surely in humanity, which he called, *very good*.



Charity Call Committee Report

We conducted two Zoom interviews with a pastor in March and are working on our next steps in considering him.

We are in the process of mailing personalized letters to between 15 and 20 certified pastors on the LCMC website who have indicated they are available for a call. We will be following up with phone calls and other personal contact. We also are preparing to post our pastor position on the websites of some LCMC-affiliated seminaries.

Please continue to mention this opening to pastors and friends from other LCMC congregations and let us know how we can assist in outreach. We ask for your continued prayers for our work and encourage you to share with us any concerns and suggestions. Our email address is callcommittee@charitylutheran.org.

Scott Carter, Sarah Erickson, Clark Johnson, Khalin Dendy, John Kuhn, Dawn Kindel and Andrea Collin.

Call Committee questions can be emailed to:
callcommittee@charitylutheran.org

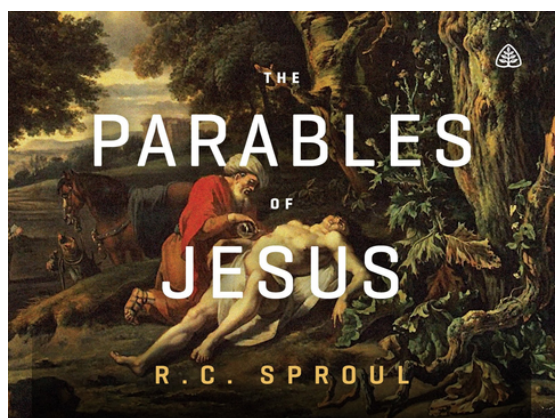
April Events

Amazing Grays

The Amazing Grays will meet Tuesday, April 9 at 6:00 p.m. for a catered dinner. Rick Collin will be speaking about presidents who have visited North Dakota.



Please let Renee Walz know if you plan to attend by Sunday evening, April 7, so she can order food Monday morning. Please RSVP to Renee at 400-1201 by text or phone call.



***7 week session
April 7-May 19

Gospel Sing-Along

Sunday, April 7

2:00-3:30 p.m.

Charity Lutheran Church

This is for you and your Gospel music loving friends and family who enjoy listening to or singing along to Gospel music. Words are projected up on screen. Led by Fueller sisters, Lorri Middleider and Christie Neumiller. Open to public. Coffee fellowship following. (Anyone can bring a treat to share.) The offering taken is for Heaven's Helpers Soup Café.

Pinochle Group

The Pinochle Group will meet Friday, April 19 at 6:00 p.m. Reserve a spot by texting John Seedorf at 701-426-9768. **May 17 is the next evening.**



Quilting Group

The Quilting Group will meet Saturday, April 6 at 9:00 a.m. Please join us as we make graduate quilts for May 2024. We will meet from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Contact Liz Landis at 258-1228 in the main office for more information. **May 11 is the next meeting.**



“The Parables of Jesus” Sunday Educational Offering

Sundays at 10:45 a.m.
Charity Sanctuary

In this series, Dr. R.C. Sproul examines several parables of Jesus, exploring the rich truths they reveal about who Jesus is and what He came to achieve through His life, death, and resurrection.

Class of 2024!

Graduation Sunday is
May 19, 2024

We need your baby & senior photos!

Please email your photos to:
jennifer.braun@charitylutheran.org

Charity's Newest Members



Jim & Delores Brown



Ardythe Kurle



Kent Olson

Welcome!



Nate & Tiffany Sailer



Adam Winarske

Introducing the



Plant a single potato, give it time to grow and it will produce multiple potatoes. So it is with any memorial, honorarium, donation or gift to the TRUST FUND. It grows and lasts forever while producing earnings for gifting. With a single donation become a SPUD CLUB MEMBER for 2024. Donate now and your name will remain on this list for the year!!

Help us welcome our newest members to Charity Lutheran. They completed the steps to become a part of our family. New member Sunday was held on March 3.

Mission Mexico International

Reverend Enrique Estrada

It is with joy in my heart that I contact you personally through this letter. Months come and go, and we continue our involvement in a ministry that in the eyes of God is significant, as we see people living their lives, growing in their faith and advancing the kingdom of God.

As many of you know I am the founder of Mission Mexico International (MMI) and at the same time the Director of Ministry in Mexico. I have lived in Monterrey since I started this ministry in February of 1991. God has been with us since then. We have seen the actions of God in us and through us. I started alone, always supported by a group of churches and individuals from the Midwest of the U.S. and a few from other states like Arizona. Thank God for his faithfulness toward this ministry and participation in the spreading of the gospel.

These last three years God has blessed our community in Monterrey with lots of babies. Our church is a young congregation. Many of our youth got married and started forming families. This brings lots of joy into our hearts and God continues blessing us with new people every day.

One of our dreams as we started this MMI ministry was to expand it and take it into other states in our beloved country. As a response from God toward our desire, it began to happen. Our ministry is a small organization. We have been very faithful to our Lutheran roots and also to the purity of the gospel and the preaching of the Scriptures without adulterating them. Because of that we remain small and consistent. We branched out our ministry to Rio Bravo, a fairly large city toward the border of Texas. We sent Pastor Victor Barbosa and his beautiful wife Lucy Castor and their three children who are Adriana, Santiago and Sebastian. Two of them are teenagers and one is a pre-teen. They are so committed to their church that many people from the community where they serve are very attracted to their ministry. In fact, there is a group of youth who gathers every week with them and most of the kids are members of Sebastian's soccer team. It is so beautiful to see the pastor's kids being a beacon of the light of Christ in the area. Lucy has friends from different activities in the community who became Christian just because of her friendship. This church's name is Good Shepherd Lutheran and they are always interacting with the community in different ways such as Christmas celebrations, children's day, Mother's Day, etc. Pastor Victor and Lucy were serving on the Parents directive organization of the school where their kids study. So, we are very pleased with the involvement of the pastoral family in the community.

Juan Vazquez is our other pastor who planted a church in Monterrey and was called by God to move to the big metro area of Guadalajara. That city is located about 12 hours from Monterrey to the west. Juan left Monterrey 10 years ago just asking God to guide him. During those 10 years he was able to establish a house church that strove to survive the odds of life such as not having a permanent place to meet, and the Pandemic. Thank God they have overcome all the difficulties and are still functioning. The House church is called Family of God Lutheran Community Church. At the same time Pastor Juan was offered a ministry among the Huichol Tribe in the state of Nayarit. He would travel 4 hours towards the ocean in the mountains in order to bring the word to that group together with food and clothing. That has been proven to be God's will and He has blessed the efforts. So Pastor Juan travels to that community 3-4 times per year. I have visited the ministry once.

As Pastor Juan and his wife Teresita and their children were looking for discernment from God on what to do next, the couple and their children, who are completely committed to serve alongside of their father and mother, and not knowing if Family of God will make it after the Pandemic, were introduced to a neglected Missouri Synod congregation named "All Saints Lutheran Church", which after wrongdoings of a former pastor and misdirection from the synod, decided to find a different Lutheran body to join. They even considered going with another denomination. But it was God's plan to expose Pastor Juan to that community since he arrived in Guadalajara 10 years before. So, they approached him and ask him to become their pastor. Pastor Juan put several conditions in order to decide if he could be their pastor. First, he said I have to consult this with my president Pastor Enrique Estrada. Secondly, I do not want to have anything to do with Missouri Synod or the Mexican equivalent, and lastly, you have to join MMI and LCMC. So, to make a long story short, I met with the council of the congregation in Guadalajara and explained to them what MMI was all about and of course LCMC.

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Reverend Enrique Estrada

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

April 1
Desirae Seedorf

April 8
Ray Schock

April 3
Ken Geiger
Nathaniel Oakland
Dennis Simenson

April 9
Sonja Bosch
Adam Winarske

April 6
Pam Miller

April 10
Ryan Geiger

April 17
Bria Erickson

April 25
Monica Eckroth

April 22
Brent Allen

April 26
Gary Oakland

April 24
Dylan Chamley

April 27
Dennis Greenstein
Kathy Wermager



Those who remain
in love
remain in God
and
God
remains
in them.
1 JOHN 4:16



April 2 - Bob and Patti Nordvall
April 18 - Ron and Linda Mathern
April 24 - Don and Kathy Nordquist



stephen at Charity Lutheran MINISTRY.

Pooky's Triumph

Like a struggling butterfly, my grief will emerge into something beautiful and new

by Bethel Bretscher Crockett

My mother, Marguerite Bretscher, died suddenly on July 4, 1998, at an airport as she and my father were returning home from vacation. Just 16 hours earlier she'd called to tell me of my niece's birth—her 22nd grandchild. When our conversation ended, I didn't know that I had told my mother good-bye for the last time.

The months following her death were filled with disbelief, emptiness and utter despair. Despite my upbringing in a Lutheran parsonage, I found that I desperately needed repeated reassurances of God's love and promises. As the Easter following my mother's death approached, I yearned for a visible metaphor of resurrection.

During Lent, our Sunday school youth raise mail-order caterpillars that are timed to enter into the chrysalis stage and emerge as butterflies for an Easter morning release. Maybe I should join them? Our family had released butterflies at my mother's burial service. So I brought home three caterpillars and named two of them Dot and Mildred in memory of my great-aunts. The third one I called by my mother's nickname, "Pooky."

On Holy Saturday morning, my children discovered Mildred, now a butterfly, hanging beside her chrysalis. Later that day we watched in awe as a newly created Dot appeared. By Easter morning we could see Pooky's orange and black wings within a transparent membrane breaking through her chrysalis. We hoped she would emerge soon so we could release her with Dot and Mildred in the Sunday school butterfly ceremony.

But on the long ride to church, traumatized perhaps by the moving car, Pooky violently trembled and struggled to break free. During Sunday school she became very still, and the chrysalis that entombed her blackened. She remained motionless as we drove home after church, quite in contrast to the way she had writhed on the trip earlier that morning. It weighed on me that the reassurance I so desperately sought was not forthcoming.

That afternoon, as we drove our two children back to college, I couldn't stop thinking about the dark, motionless chrysalis. "It's only a caterpillar. It doesn't matter that its name is Pooky," I told myself. "There will always be other caterpillars that you can name Pooky. Just pretend Dot or Mildred was Pooky. What difference does it make? It doesn't change anything."

Still, despair overwhelmed me on the ride home. "I killed this butterfly," I thought. "Why did I take it to church and upset it with the car ride? Whatever made me think it was a good idea to name it Pooky anyway?"

And then, "Why did God have to do this to me this Easter? Doesn't God understand what I'm going through right now? Couldn't God take care of one stupid little butterfly?"

I decided that in the morning I would take the chrysalis into the woods and leave it. Perhaps the butterfly was still alive and would emerge? I would never know, but I could always cling to that hope.

That evening I was reluctant to look in the butterfly cage, but some movement caught my eye. There sat a butterfly, triumphantly fanning her wings.

Instantly I was struck by more than just the butterfly. Pooky was perched over her empty chrysalis, which was split open and withering. Under the chrysalis were red bloodlike stains of waste material from the hatching. Yet above these signs of death and struggle—a living butterfly!

That image remains a powerful metaphor, reassuring and resurrecting in its own right: the suffering, the pain, the hopelessness, the empty tomb, the exhilarating joy, the new and glorious life. I began to see my grief as the traumatized struggling butterfly in the hands of a loving, merciful Father. I learned to trust that through God's grace something beautiful and new would emerge even in the face of my weakness, tears, pain and hopelessness. I, too, would live again, now and forever.

The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed! (And so has Pooky.)



Mission Mexico International

(continued from page 7)

After a few months of adjustments Juan was serving them like an interim and finally they decided to call Juan as their pastor, but the joining of the church to MMI and LCMC was on standby. We decided to install Juan and we had the Rev. Julie Smith representing LCMC and the president of the board of directors from MMI, Brett Johnson, together with me as the Director of the Ministry in Mexico. By the time Julie Smith left Guadalajara, and as she was transported by the president of the church council, they made the decision to become members of LCMC and MMI. Thanks be to God. The new congregation comes with a complete campus with everything in it. A big church building, many classrooms and a big yard and a parsonage. It really came as a blessing from God to us. Now we have a center of operations for the ministry in Guadalajara and Nayarit.

As you can see God is acting on our favor every day. We are proud to be Christian, Lutheran, Mexican and connected to LCMC. As I sent the Christmas Letter to Charity Lutheran, you can find interesting pictures that will show you some of our ministry happenings this past year.

I really thank you Charity for believing in our initiatives and continuing to support us in prayer and monetarily. Please continue doing so. We want to be obedient to Christ's call in sharing the Gospel wherever God will send us.

Your friend,
Reverend Enrique Estrada
Founder and Director of Mission Mexico International, LCMC

The WOW Finale will be held on Wednesday, May 8. This will include a Summer Send-Off party for ALL Charity youth from preschool through grade 12! Stay tuned for more information.



Announcing Vacation Bible School 2024 June 3-6

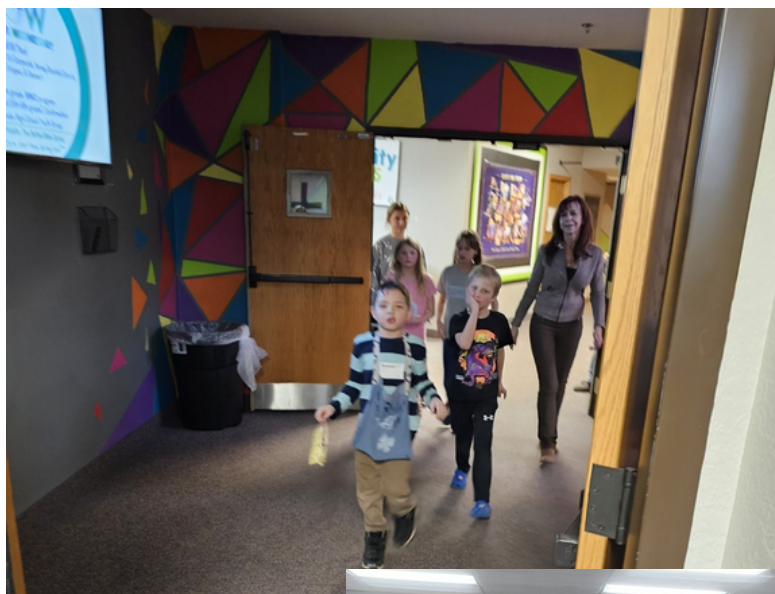
OUR THEME THIS YEAR IS SCUBA!
"DIVING INTO FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD"

Kids will be immersed in the Word and discover what living water is really all about and experience the never-ending love of God.

It takes a lot of wonderful volunteers to make VBS a success. If you are interested in helping coordinate or volunteer in any capacity, please email Jennifer Braun at jennifer.braun@charitylutheran.org.



Youth Easter Party



Charity kids and youth had a fun Easter party on March 20. They celebrate with a meat and cheese tray, cake, lemonade, fellowship and FUN!!



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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Bismarck, ND 58503

CHARITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

120 Aspen Avenue, Bismarck, ND 58503

Phone: 701-258-1228 or Fax: 701-258-4398

Email: contact@charitylutheran.org

www.charitylutheran.org

**GOSPEL MUSIC
SING-ALONG**

Sunday, April 7

2:00 - 3:30 PM

Contact Lorri Mittleider at (701) 400-1849 for more information.

