



December 2022



Pastor Brad Miller

GOOD NEWS



Jennifer Braun

Discovering Advent – A Season of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love

Advent is the beginning of the new church year. It's a time to start anew and begin again. The word "Advent" comes from the Latin,

"to come" and is a time of preparation and anticipation for the coming of Christ at Christmas where we celebrate that Jesus, God's son, was born into our world. While many of us prepare for Christmas by shopping and decorating and trimming the tree, do you take time to prepare your heart for the birth of Jesus? Advent is a time to do that. Celebrating the Advent season can help us be more faithful disciples as we prepare for Christmas. To help celebrate Advent, let's turn our attention to each of the Advent candles and what they mean.

First Candle

Called the Prophets candle, the first Advent candle represents the prophets of the Old Testament, especially Isaiah, who waited in hope for the Messiah's arrival.

Second Candle

The second candle is frequently called the Bethlehem candle. Micah had foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, which is also the birthplace of King David.

Third Candle

The third candle is referred to as the Shepherd's candle. On the third Sunday of Advent we celebrate the joy of Christmas. To the shepherd's great joy, the angels announced that Jesus came for humble, unimportant people like them, too. In liturgy, the color rose signifies joy.

Fourth Candle

The candle for the fourth Sunday of Advent is the Angel's candle. It represents the messengers who announced the birth of the Messiah.



(continued on page 4)

EVENTS

Saturday, December 10
Preschool/Elementary Party
10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, December 14
High School Bowling
6:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 18
Stuff the Bag/Christmas Invite
3:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 21
Middle School Bowling
6:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 24
Christmas Eve Services
2 | 4 | 10 p.m.

Sunday, December 25
Christmas Service
10:00 a.m.

Executive Director of Ministries Doug Leet

" And, lo..."

We have a tradition in our family, as many of you may have, where I read the Christmas story as presented in the Gospel of Luke to our family on Christmas Eve. For most of the years since my kids were little, I used a nice large book that we received through Aid Association of Lutherans, which has somehow gone missing in recent years. But as I recall, it used the King James Version in the story. Now when I read the story out of my New International Version Bible, it seems not quite right after all these years.

As a comparison of Luke 2:9-10:

NIV - "9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people."

KJV - "9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid."

"10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

It may just be me, but when reading these passages aloud, the King James Version just sounds more majestic.

With this season of Advent upon us, a new reading of Luke 2:1-21 seemed to be in order. And there are a few things that stand out in the story. First, in all the majestic angelic glory in announcing the coming of a savior, an anointed king, Jesus arrived in the most **humble** of settings.

Secondly, "And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not:' " Jesus had told his disciples not to be afraid on different occasions too. If both the angelic host and Jesus says "**Fear not**" in scary circumstances, then that is good advice.

Thirdly, God is trustworthy. When the shepherds heard the message, they immediately acted on it, to "...find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." These lowly shepherds decided to **trust and to act**.

And lastly, they spread the word, "And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds." Again, these lowly shepherds went out to **share** the good news of the coming of the Savior.

So, I pray that with the Lord's help, my Christian walk is characterized by humility, no fear, trusting and acting, and sharing the good news of Jesus with others through my words and actions. Now, to find that book.



Doug Leet

Financial Report

Oct. Actual Income	\$63,596
Oct. Budgeted Income	\$<u>103,262</u>
Difference	\$39,666

Oct. Actual Income	\$63,596
Oct. Actual Expense	\$<u>62,264</u>
Difference	\$1,332

YTD Actual Income	\$793,244
YTD Budgeted Income	\$<u>1,032,623</u>
Difference	\$239,379

YTD Actual Income	\$793,244
YTD Actual Expense	\$<u>798,304</u>
Difference	\$5,060

Sunday, January 8th



NOVEMBER VISION COUNCIL UPDATE

Greetings from the Vision Council. I hope everyone was able to stay safe and warm through November and it definitely looks like it is going to be a white Christmas. We needed the moisture, but I sure would have preferred a different delivery method. With all of the time spent moving snow it also gave me time to reflect on all the blessings I have to be grateful for. I do have a snowblower, all-wheel drive vehicle, warm house, a large and healthy family, and a wonderful church to serve in. God has blessed me with much, and even with shoveling snow and dealing with difficult circumstances, Thanksgiving is a great time to remember that. Like many of us I try to make every day one of thanksgiving with varying degrees of success. I am still a work in progress leaning heavily on God's grace and mercy though.

The Vision council has a number of issues we continue to deal with. Jessi Herz (Youth Director) has resigned as of November 13th. We do want to thank her for all she accomplished in the brief time she was serving at Charity and wish her the best in her future endeavors. Dallas Sailer is also resigning as treasurer at the end of the year. He has faithfully served in that position for eighteen years. Thank you so much for all those years of faithful service to Charity Lutheran. Doug and Dallas have been wrestling with the 2023 budget and have put together what should be very close to a final draft. This year's turmoil has definitely impacted next year's budget numbers and I just want to give Doug and Dallas a big thanks for their efforts. I was very encouraged by the continued faithful giving of our congregation as we go through this difficult pastoral transition. You are all invited to the budget forum we will be holding on December 11th between services for a preview of it.

We have also been discussing the idea of dropping back to one service for Sunday worship. There has been no decision made on this, but the Vision Council would be very interested in your thoughts and feedback on this. Drop us an email, text, or catch one of us on a Sunday morning. We would really like to hear from you about this.

Weekly corporate prayer every Tuesday at 6:30 will also continue through January with the exception of December 20th and 27th. Thank you to all that have been attending and I invite all who can to attend.

Staff and the Vision Council continue to update the membership rosters. Thank you to all that have returned their attestation forms. A reminder mailing has been sent out to those who have not responded, and we encourage you to do so. If you wish to be considered a Voting Disciple, we really need to hear from you. Time is running out with the Annual Meeting being scheduled in early January.

As 2022 is coming to a close I have spent a little time reflecting on all we have been through as a church. A lot of turmoil, changes, and strife. There were many times I would lay awake and wonder if we were ever going to move forward again. But as I sit here reflecting, I realize we have been moving forward all along. It has been a long slow journey and difficult to measure, but there has been much progress. We are moving back to our governing documents, embracing and emphasizing the importance of our Lutheran doctrine. With a church membership as diverse as ours that was not accepted by all, and that led to our division and eventually to some feeling the need to leave. As much as that saddens me, I also believe it had to happen before a new pastor could succeed here. We are a Lutheran church, we are Spirit-led, and we are moving forward with healing, the call process, and all that God has called us to do. We have spent most of this year looking inward dealing with our internal issues. I feel most of that is now behind us and it is time to start looking outwards and engaging in the work God has given us; Expanding His Kingdom.

God Bless
Mike Fluharty
Vision Council President

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

Discovering Advent

(continued from page 1)

As Charity disciples, we will walk this Advent Journey together as we prepare for the birth of Christ and we have something special to experience together; God has a face and we want to know what God's face looks like to you. How will you reflect His face this Christmas through the faces of hope, peace, joy and love? (please see page X for more information on this Advent journey at Charity).

May you all experience the 4 weeks of joyful anticipation as we await our dear savior's birth on Christmas and may God bless all of you during this Advent and Christmas season.

Jennifer Braun

CHARITY CALL COMMITTEE REPORT

The Call Committee is seeking input from Charity members in a survey that will be distributed during worship services the first three Sundays in December. Information from the survey will help the Call Committee finalize the job description for the new pastor.

In addition to the surveys being distributed on December 4, 11 and 18, the Call Committee will hold a Q&A session between services on December 18 for any members wanting to further discuss the call process.

The timeline the committee has established for moving forward is to post the position opening on the LCMC website and other outlets by the end of January and to begin reviewing applications in March.

The next meeting of the Call Committee will be December 19. Please reach out to us either individually or through our email at callcommittee@charitylutheran.org. We ask for your continued prayers for our congregation and the call process.

Call Committee members - Beth Allen, Andrea Collin, Melissa Hill, Laura Kourajian and Scott Carter.

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

Upcoming Office Closures



Advent Prayer

Lord Jesus,

Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

We who have so much to do and seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day,

We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.

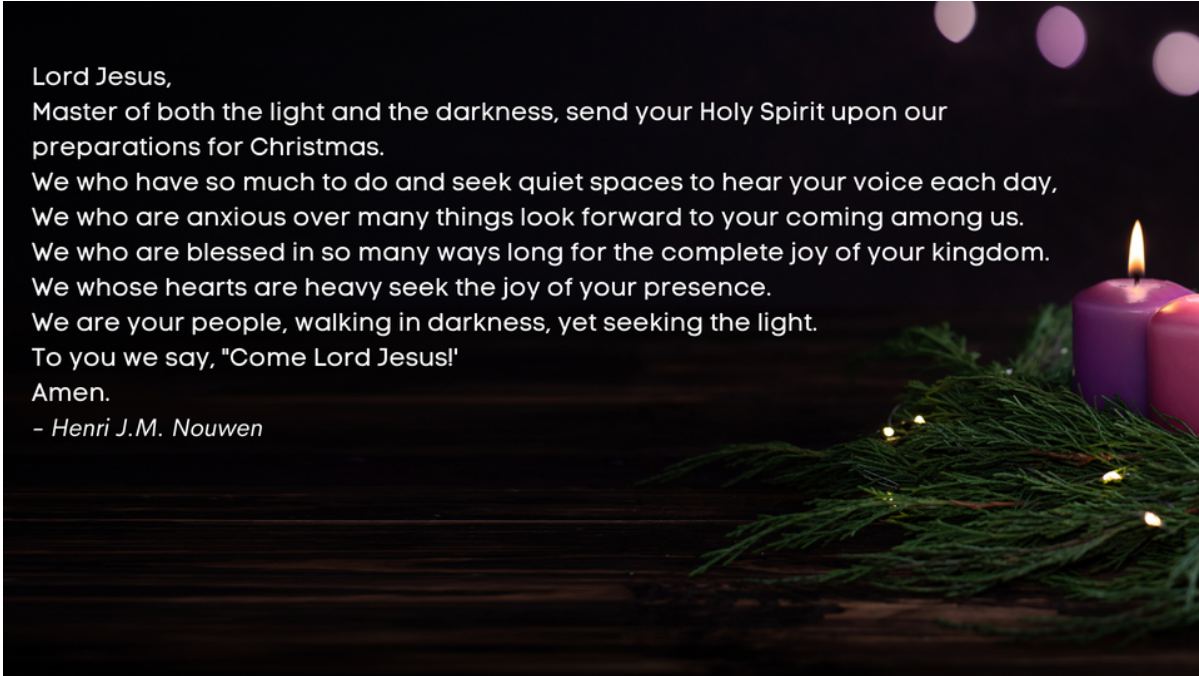
We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!"

Amen.

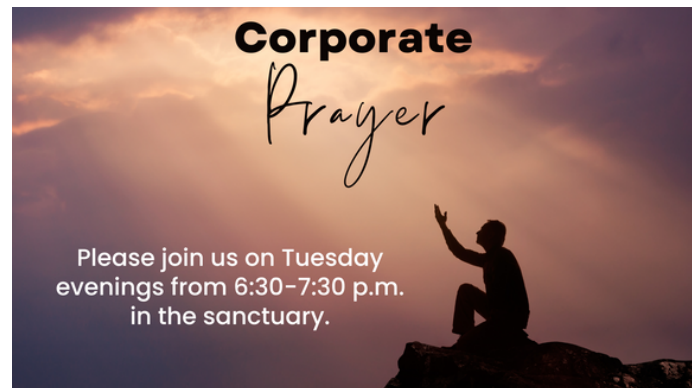
- Henri J.M. Nouwen



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."*

There will not be Corporate Prayer on December 20th or 27th.



Please help us invite others to worship with us this Christmas!

Please join us on **Sunday, December 18th at 3:00 p.m.** in the fellowship hall as we prepare bags inviting community members to join us for worship this Christmas. We will stuff the bags with a Christmas book, a flyer about Charity and a candy cane. We will then go door to door and hang the bags. No personal interaction required. This is a great activity for singles, couples, and families! Let's help spread the word and invite people to worship with us this Christmas!



A Charity Mission Moment - LAMP

Deb Vathauer, volunteer missionary serving Easterville



Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV)

Our journey started with a prayer – for guidance and wisdom to build a team from Madison, WI to travel to Easterville, MB to conduct a fun LAMP Vacation Bible School (VBS) for the children.

Two volunteers in January grew to nine volunteers by March, all excited about bringing the love of Jesus to Easterville. Our team consisted of a project manager, four teachers, two retirees, and two teenagers. Each had skills needed for our VBS week.

Our team began prayerful planning for the 1000-mile journey (each way). We reserved rental vans and hotels, conducted fundraising, and planned lessons, songs, and projects for that week. But, as we set out for our journey, many setbacks were encountered.

Anxious moments arose when our rental vans were smaller than expected. We prayed. After streamlining our packing, everything fit!

Then a team member tested positive. (By riding in two smaller vans, the two groups had remained socially distanced, which was miraculous in itself.) Our modified team of one van with only four volunteers was warmly welcomed by the teens in Easterville. With their help, we offered the full VBS week as planned.

Our full team of nine kept in touch daily. We prayed together for the needs of the on-site team who began each day tired. They shared pictures and stories and prayed they would minister to the children. The Lord provided perseverance.

By the middle of the week, exhaustion was setting in. Easterville was under heat advisories. The number of children attending fluctuated with many from the same extended family. We wondered if we were making a difference.

A team member visited the band office that day and met all of the Council members. Each one introduced themselves and shared their childhood VBS memories. They all had positive experiences and expressed gratitude that this ministry continues today. Perseverance through our many challenges DID make a difference in the lives of these children and the community!

Note: More than ever, the Indigenous people in northern Canada urgently need the hope that you and I have in Christ. A huge thank you to the members of Charity Lutheran for your ongoing support of the ministry of LAMP. You are on the front lines sharing the gospel with us!

LAMP's Advent devotional is available at your church office, or subscribe to receive it daily by email here on our website www.lampministry.org.





DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

December 1
Chad Kourajian

December 2
Lisa Aamodt

December 3
Mavis Mikkelsen
Zachery Vincent
Jerry Walz

December 4
Michaela Casey
ElRita Nelson

December 5
Liz Landis

December 7
Kayla Wiest

December 9
Steve Miller

December 10
Olivia Duffy
Alvin Jaeger

December 15
Marlene Bohrer
Judi Swanberg

December 17
Eliza Bullock
Kristin Faragher

December 18
Sue Hagen

December 19
Payton Bauman
Ashley Pulver

December 20
Beverly Anderson
Ana Dendy
LaVonna Gums
Daniel Klindtworth
Carol Simenson

December 21
Jon Gums

December 22
Zachary Devine

December 23
Samson Parnell

December 24
Emily Hershey
Tom Oakland

December 25
Emilia Lang

December 26
Nadine Butts

December 27
Lauden Gums

December 28
Sharon Rosenvold
Sara Schwarz

December 29
Kassidy Kaldor
Edwina Njos
Alison Schmid

December 30
Jill Anderson
Shelby Custer
Carter Kost
Missy Theel
Deb Uline

December 31
Audrey Liudahl
Alvin Schmierer
Sharon Zimmerman



*Those who remain
in love
remain in God
and God
remains in them.*

1 JOHN 4:16



December 5 - Dave and Barb Lee
December 8 - Jim and Jennifer Skjod
December 10 - Arlan and Linda Okerson
December 12 - Ethan and Danielle Berg
December 17 - Tom and Angela Oakland
December 19 - Ken and Connie Geiger
December 20 - Thomas and Karen Swanson
December 28 - John and Stephanie Kuhn
December 30 - Steve and Nadine Butts



We all see the ads on television depicting family gatherings, gift openings, and/or baking special sweets for the Christmas holiday. Hopefully many of us experience these events, but at times this is not possible. If your family is not in town or there is an unexpected illness. The holidays this year may be a time during which you may be feeling alone or sad. Our Stephen Ministers will come alongside of you and show you God's love – not just by what they take to show they care. They will listen to you, provide confidential spiritual care and support. They will walk alongside of you. They are loving Christians who care, support, listen, share, and will pray with you.

MERRY
CHRISTMAS

From
Charity
Lutheran's
Stephen
Ministers

Dear God, we ask for your blessing this Christmas season for Pastor Brad and his family, Charity staff and their families, and all of our congregation and their families Lord. We pray for those who are going through a loss and lift up their hearts. Lord, please help those who are having health problems, financial difficulties, family issues, or any other challenges. Lord, thank you for this body of believers and our devoted staff members, vision council and every single person who volunteers. Thank you for our Stephen Ministers who are your hands and feet to reach the hurting on earth acting as your vessel. In your name we pray Lord. Amen.

If you need a Stephen Minister please call the Church office 258-1228

No Amazing Grays or Quilting Group in December.

Next Gathering:

Amazing Grays - January 10th, 2023
Quilting Group - January 28th, 2023

PINOCHLE GROUP

The Pinochle Group will meet Friday, December 16th at 6:00 p.m. Reserve a spot by texting John Seedorf at 701-426-9768.



Advent 2022



Everything changes for us when we see the Face of God. What does God's Face look like to you? What is the image that acknowledges where you are in this Advent season of life?

CHARITY FAMILY

What does God's Face look like to you?

Is it:

*a snow-covered tree *a family *an animal *Salvation Army kettle *a loved one in heaven *a piece of pie

We invite you to bring a picture of how you see the Face of God. We will attach your picture to a 4" acrylic ornament that will be displayed on our Advent Tree. (Please put your name on the back of your picture). After Christmas you will be able to take the ornament home to hang on your tree.

You have said, "Seek my Face." My heart says to you, "Your face, Lord, do I seek." Psalm 27:8 ESV

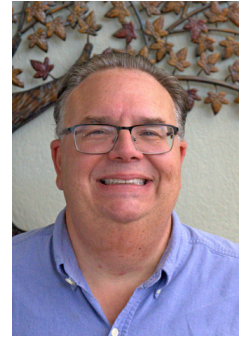




Charity Children's and Youth Ministry Update Letter

To: All Charity parents, grandparents, and volunteers serving youth and children

It would be a profound understatement to declare that our youth ministry staffing transitions in the past few months have been complicated. Some of the disruptions that resulted were unavoidable – but some of the challenges were foreseeable. I apologize personally to all who were frustrated by changes and cancellations that we could have managed better. I woefully underestimated the extent to which some of our former staff would resort to deception, thievery, and dishonesty in their quest to build their private ministry empire. We won't resort to any of those tactics, but we will be better at communicating as we move forward.



Pastor Brad Miller

Please let me update you on some important changes:

- Charity is committed to serving all ages of kids with excellence. Nathaniel Oakland will be expanding his current duties to include coordination of youth ministry and children's ministry along with me. He will be the key point of contact on a temporary basis. Our fantastic volunteers will continue to carry out the specific ministries. All kid-related future staffing needs will be assessed and restructured with the input of the new Senior Pastor in 2023.
- Charity is committed to providing a solid Biblical education for kids of all ages. Our curricula moving forward will all be Bible-based. Charity kids will learn to use their Bibles and they will learn what is in those Bibles!
- Charity is committed to safety for our kids. Child safety protocols will no longer be a mere joke at Charity. The physical, emotional, and spiritual health of our kids is now a top priority. Staff will now be held to the same professional norms that are commonplace in reputable churches. Volunteers will be vetted and instructed regarding safety for all.

We will be continuing to offer a range of faith activities and educational programming on both Sundays and Wednesdays when we restart in January. Watch for communications from the church with new schedules starting in January. On December 7th, 11th, and 18th we will be hosting open houses on the lower level of the church building to connect with parents and volunteers. Christmas parties are planned for each age group during December. A ski trip and other activities are being planned for early 2023.

Nurturing our youngest members and encouraging them to grow in faith is both a great privilege and a great responsibility for Charity. I invite you to participate and I invite you to continue to pray for our young people and for all youth in God's vast creation.

Peace be with you,

Pastor Miller

December Kids and Youth Events

We are looking forward to some fun December events for all of our young people! We hope your kids will join us!



Preschool & Elementary Christmas Party

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10TH
10:00 A.M - 12:00 P.M.

ALL PRESCHOOL AND ELEMENTARY KIDS ARE INVITED TO COME FOR SNACKS, FUN & GAMES AND TO DECORATE GINGERBREAD COOKIES AND HOUSES!





High School BOWLING PARTY

December 14th
Midway Lanes, Mandan
\$10/PERSON
INCLUDES 2 GAMES OF BOWLING, SHOES, AND PIZZA!



Register Here



Middle School Bowling Party

December 21st
Midway Lanes, Mandan
\$10/PERSON
INCLUDES 2 GAMES OF BOWLING, SHOES, AND PIZZA!



Register Here

6:30-8:30pm

Please contact Nathaniel Oakland with any questions at nathaniel.oakland@charitylutheran.org.

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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CHARITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

120 Aspen Avenue, Bismarck, ND 58503

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

Email: office@charitylutheran.org

www.charitylutheran.org

Worship with us this Christmas

Candlelight Christmas Eve: 2:00 | 4:00 | 10:00 p.m.***

Christmas Day: 10:00 a.m.



***traditional service with communion