



January 2023



Pastor Brad Miller

GOOD NEWS

Intentional Interim Senior Pastor Brad Miller **From the Pastor**

The New Year is a time famous (and infamous) for the making and breaking of resolutions. 2023 will be a big year of transition for Charity as we prepare to welcome a new Senior Pastor and as we rebuild upon the solid foundation of God’s Word with due attention to sound doctrine. I am humbly and boldly calling all Charity disciples to a faithful fourfold engagement to aid us in growing individually and collectively to be bolder and more effective in our witness and service – all in grateful obedience to our merciful Savior. Please incorporate these four areas of emphasis in your practices for 2023:

Engage in the Word

Let us all read the Bible together in 2023! We will use the M’Cheyne reading plan, which has been blessing believers around the world for nearly two centuries. By using the same plan, we as believers will be contemplating the same texts every day and at year’s end we will have been through the whole Bible. Though the passages are the same, the plan can be used with any translation. Our website will have links and resources so that you can also have the daily readings instantly available on your computer, tablet, or phone. The texts are even available as audio files for those who prefer to listen!

Engage in Worship

We will be worshipping together in a single Sunday service starting January 15th! It will be a blessing to share worship and fellowship simultaneously with all Charity disciples. It may be a bit crowded at times, but we will be blessed by the communal experience. See the nearby new Sunday schedule.

Engage in Prayer

Corporate prayer is back on Tuesdays in January. We also need to maintain and strengthen our daily prayer lives. See also the announcement about the LCMC Three Days of Prayer.

(continued on page 4)

EVENTS

Wednesday, January 4
Ukraine Mission Report
7:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 8
Annual Meeting
12:00 p.m.

Tuesday, January 10
Amazing Grays
6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, January 11
WOW Resumes
5:00 p.m.

Friday, January 20
Pinochle Night
6:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 28
Quilting Group
9:00 a.m.

Executive Director of Ministries Doug Leet

"What if..."

I was visiting with a fellow in my office a few weeks ago, and the topic of two books of interest to us both (he is further along in reading than I) came up. The first is Rod Dreher's 2017 book, "The Benedict Option," in which he warns that during this post-modern, post-Christian time, there are new "dark ages" coming. We are entering a time where a new morality and a "soft totalitarianism" rule. Where there is a need for deeper faith communities to form in order to carry the Christian faith through a time of persecution, rather than putting our trust and hope in political personalities. Thus, individuals and congregations grow deeper in their faith, having the courage to live out that faith in a way that is counter to the prevailing culture. The second is the same author's 2020 book, "Live Not by Lies," in which he uses Alexander Solzhenitsyn as an example of being a Christian dissident in an atheistic society. Having the courage to speak and live out the truth, even as it's under attack by the ruling culture. Solzhenitsyn paid a heavy price for that...and we may need to as well (see his quotes on this page).

Over the years Charity has, in effect, planted four other congregations: two intentionally, and two not. The fellow with whom I was visiting also commented that he noticed Charity's mission and vision statements, along with the prophetic word given to Charity 20 years ago, are prominently displayed by our sanctuary.

He then commented that those statements contain all of the elements of a church plant, and that we have a wonderful opportunity here at Charity to move forward.



Doug Leet

In Pastor Brad's first newsletter article in June, something that stood out to me was his comment that "Charity has taken a bold doctrinal stand. Charity's constitution enshrines these credal and confessional distinctives as "unalterable" elements of the constitution - meaning that they must be preserved perpetually and are not subject to amending." Charity's mission and vision statements and prophetic word have similarly taken a bold stand for growing in faith and discipleship. Please read and meditate on these statements, which can be found on the "Who We Are" page on our website. It is one thing to "take a bold stand" on something, but another to then actually implement and practice it.

You see, I believe that the ideas put forth in Rod Dreher's books and the boldness of Charity's vision and mission statements are related. Those statements have been countercultural for a long time, and we cannot afford to be shallow in our faith or "culturally relevant." There are definitely people that have grown in their faith and discipleship at Charity and continue to do so. But what if, we as a congregation, were truly, truly:

- A shelter in Jesus Christ
- A haven to many
- Disciples being prepared and being transformed by the Holy Spirit
- A place for healing and empowered to serve others
- God's "Oak of Righteousness," standing strong for the truth

Financial Report

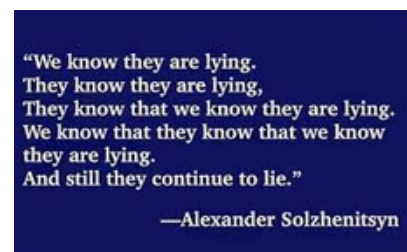
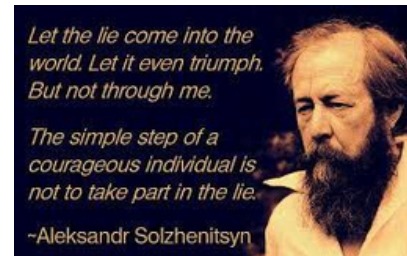
Nov. Actual Income	\$47,673
Nov. Budgeted Income	<u>\$103,262</u>
Difference	\$55,589

Nov. Actual Income	\$47,673
Nov. Actual Expense	<u>\$66,975</u>
Difference	\$19,302

YTD Actual Income	\$840,917
YTD Budgeted Income	<u>\$1,135,885</u>
Difference	\$294,968

YTD Actual Income	\$840,917
YTD Actual Expense	<u>\$866,591</u>
Difference	\$25,674

What does that truly look like in a deeper way? The answers are vital as we continue to move forward with God as our rudder, guiding the way.



November Vision Council Update

Greetings and Merry Christmas from the Vision Council.

As usual the weather is creating a few challenges for holiday travel plans, but we hope you all had a blessed and safe Christmas. It can be a stressful and anxious time with shopping, meal planning, and travel schedules with weather and road conditions piled on. I hope you all also set time aside each day to stop and be still in His presence to truly give thanks for what this holiday represents: The birth of His son and our salvation. What a wonderful gift that is.

The Nominating Committee submitted a replacement to fill the vacant position on the Vision Council and we approved that appointment at our last meeting. Matt Kaldor has accepted the request to serve the remaining two years of this vacancy. His past experience and leadership will be much appreciated as we go forward. Please join me in thanking him for stepping up to serve our church once again in this leadership position.

In last month's newsletter I announced Dallas had decided to step down as Treasurer. He has faithfully served in this position for eighteen years and we thank him for his service through all the challenges he encountered. I encourage you all to give him a big Thank You when you see him.

With Dallas stepping down from this position, it also leaves a big hole to fill. I would ask all of you in our congregation with some business or accounting-related background to prayerfully consider filling this role. If you feel God nudging you to use your experience or talents in this area, please contact Doug or any of the Vision Council members for more information about the requirements and duties of the Treasurer. Dallas will be available to work with you through a transition period.

Last month I announced the Vision Council was seeking feedback or thoughts regarding going to a single worship service on Sunday. Starting January 15, 2023, we will be transitioning to a single worship service on Sunday. Staff is continuing to sort out the details and times of the worship service and Sunday school so stay tuned for future announcements. Thank you to all who shared their feedback.

It is also time to give a brief update on our membership roster. This subject has consumed a lot of Staff and Vision Council time trying to get ready for the Annual Meeting. It is still ongoing, but I can give some general numbers today. We started with 700 or so listed in our membership. With the attestation forms that were returned approximately 220+ confirmed their membership and 150 clearly withdrew. Another 2 dozen were removed from the membership roles as it became clear they were involved in another church. That leaves us about 300 members that did not respond to two different mailings to get them to confirm membership or withdraw. The unresponsive members have now been notified that they are being removed from the roster of "Confirmed Voting Disciples" and their status changed to "Members not in good standing." If they return to active participation in the life and worship at Charity in the next year as defined in Article I of the By-laws, they will be placed back on the "Confirmed Voting Disciple" roster. There have been difficult decisions and actions taken in this process, but it has all been done within the guidelines of our Constitution and Bylaws. These actions are not meant to discourage anyone from attending Charity Lutheran but if you want to have a vote in the direction of Charity you do need to be an active participant.

God Bless
Mike Fluharty
Vision Council President

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

From the Pastor

(continued from page 1)

Engage in Missions

Charity has a great history of supporting missions. We want to deepen that resolve. We want our connection to be more than the checks that we mail far away. You will be invited to learn about and pray for our missional partners and to roll up your sleeves and participate in doing the work that God calls us to do.

New Year's Resolutions can be depressing because of the high rate of failure for so many aspirational lifestyle changes. We serve a God of grace who knows us better than to expect our perfection. We serve a God who equips our resolve through the presence of the Holy Spirit. We serve a God who wants us to be His disciples!

Learn more about reading the Bible in a Year

Please visit our website for more information. The information link can be found on the upper right hand corner of our homepage.

Here is the direct link to the Bible in a Year



Charity Call Committee Report

The Call Committee thanks everyone who completed the Pastoral Expectations Survey in December. We will use this information as we move forward in 2023.

Thanks as well to all who attended the Q&A session between services on December 18. The comments were very constructive, and we appreciate hearing from everyone who attended.

As a reminder, 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 meetings of the Call Committee will be January 3 and 10. Please reach out to us anytime either individually or through our email at callcommittee@charitylutheran.org. We ask for your continued prayers for our congregation and the call process as we move into 2023.

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

******please see the survey results on the next page.***

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

Results of Pastoral Expectations Survey

Pastoral Expectations Survey 12-2022
 Charity Lutheran Call Committee

Top 5 out of 13 Characteristics of Our New Senior Pastor

final N=87

Amount Cked	Characteristic	rank
75	is an effective preacher/speaker.	1
21	is skilled in planning and leading worship.	9
39	gives people tools to grow in their spiritual life.	5
44	encourages people to relate their faith to their daily lives.	3
29	is a good counselor who ministers effectively to people in crisis.	7
44	is a strong and experienced leader who inspires a sense of confidence.	3
34	builds a sense of fellowship among the church staff and volunteers.	6
18	works well on a team.	11
11	has strong organizational skills	12
53	is an effective teacher committed to the educational ministry of all ages.	2
21	is committed to bring new members into the congregation.	9
9	supports global missions of the church.	13
29	deals effectively with conflict.	7

Comments Summary

15	Bible Based, preaches the inerrant word of God
6	male pastor
5	Lutheran with strong Lutheran theology
4	Contemporary Service
4	experienced leader
4	support ministry teams - Steven Ministry
1	ability to teach, all other characteristics will come from Character.
1	does not judge and accept all
1	strong young family interest and experience
1	Holy sacraments important
1	one service with Sunday school before or after
1	emotionally engage with all ages
1	approachable
1	visionary
1	able to delegate
1	Moral Character personal life follows bible teachings
1	bible prophecy and signs of the time
1	employ a youth pastor and not youth director
1	Loves Jesus First
1	Led by the Holy Spirit
1	Greet Congregation after Church

Schedule Changes

Charity has a history of streamlining the Sunday schedule for special calendar times when holiday schedules allow us to anticipate more empty seats. Such recent occasions have prompted many spontaneous observations that more or less echo a common theme: "it is really nice to have everyone gathered together at the same time." At the moment, we have enough space to accommodate our whole attendance on a normal Sunday in a single service – so we are going to try that for a while. We have also been juggling to cover all of our volunteer needs as we shift from a youth ministry model that is less entertainment-focused and more scripture-focused. Hence, we are going to shift the schedule and method for delivering teaching and worship opportunities to our kids.

My church consultant instincts tell me that such big changes are best implemented slowly after focus groups and surveys to build ownership of the "new normal." But, experience also tells me that we are (in various ways) collectively in the midst of tearing off a Band-Aid - and it is best to just get all of it done! So, after much prayer and thought, the Vision Council, the staff, and I are all inviting you to help us implement the new schedule starting January 15th. Many of you will instinctively respond: "but I prefer..." Please know that no church schedule is perfect for each household's preferences, but that this one has been configured as the best available way to use the time available and the space that we have to accomplish the goals that we deem God to have set before us.

As we get the new scheduled started, your feedback will be essential for church leaders to be able to make whatever adjustments and improvements which may prove to be necessary. Beyond the simple schedule matters, there are bigger changes in this mix. First, we want to return to a practice which was the norm for 99% of Christian history: the notion that the whole worship service is a time and space for all ages. Kids don't need to be shooed away before the sermon. We never agreed to cut Matthew 19:14, Mark 10:14, and Luke 18:16 out of our Bibles! We have seen the bitter fruit of a decade of kids encouraged to view church as "fun and games on Wednesdays and not showing up on Sundays." Going forward, we will heed the counsel of Proverbs 22:6:

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

But starting them "on the way they should go," necessarily includes setting a lifelong example. Our new schedule allows use of the sanctuary for a large Adult Class during the Sunday School hour. I will teach that class and I hope to see all of you there. There will continue to be other adult education offerings on Sunday and other days. I will start teaching on January 15th on a variety of topics related to Lutheran identity and belief.

We realize that having their kids in worship will be a jarring adjustment for some parents – and it is certainly no fault of theirs that they did things the way that Charity had been encouraging! So, we will have some supportive options – like a video feed in the youth room where parents concerned about their noisier kids can worship and let the kids be distracted with activity sheets. We are also working on an age-appropriate Bible story video series to be shown in the Gazebo.

- 8:00 a.m. Sanctuary available for music rehearsal and treehouse preps
- 9:30 a.m. Worship
 - 10:00 a.m. streaming with kid activity sheets in youth room
 - 10:00 a.m. video Bible lesson in Gazebo (nursery to grade 4 audience level)
- 10:45 a.m. Sunday School (Large adult class in sanctuary. Kids downstairs.)
 - ***There will be time for fellowship following the service.

-Pastor Miller

Ukraine Mission Trip Update

The scope of needs in our vast world are sometimes incomprehensible. Yet, God calls us to faithfully hear the call to respond to the imperatives of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. In December, Charity heard the call and responded in a big way! We raised \$27,000 and we sent Pastor Brad and Donavon there to serve.

You can hear the full report on Wednesday, January 4th at 7pm in the Sanctuary.





JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

January 1
Janae Geiger
Drew Kary

January 7
Michael Bernhardt
Mike Rowe

January 2
Rick Stockert

January 8
Treyton Bosch

January 3
Joel Anderson
Jim Skjod

January 11
Kaleb Anderson
Brooklyn Becker
Josh Churchill
Ryan Okerson
Darla Sullivan

January 4
Brad Heim

January 5
Emma Duffy

January 12
Christian Lubbers
Samuel Stelter

January 6
Courtney Seedorf

January 13
Khalin Dendy

January 14
Michael Casey
Ellengton Hill

January 16
Karrie Bauman
Dominic Chamley
Noah Ellertson
Lindsey Robinson

January 18
Logan Hegland
Bob Nelson

January 19
Joseph Becker
Jamie Peshek

January 20
Kerry Mikkelsen

January 21
Jocelyn Duffy
Dennis Torgerson
Duane Wangen

January 22
Tamara Churchill

January 23
Garrett Wahl

January 26
Janet Mitzel
Sharon Schock

January 30
Donavon
Hatzenbuhler

January 31
Kellan Bullock
David Price



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



January 4 - David & Kacie Schlecht
January 4 - Jason & Barb Weaver
January 6 - Kent & Cassie Theurer
January 23 - Craig & Lisa Keidel
January 24 - Robert & Maew Bauer



stephen at Charity Lutheran MINISTRY.

Happy New Year, Charity Lutheran Congregation!
 Our new Stephen Minister Trainees are on their last stretch of training hours.
 In February, they will start what is called 'Continuing Education.'
 As part of our Stephen Ministers' continuing education to keep developing their caregiving skills, we are arranging to have a few people for discussion areas on:

- *aging, long-term care, dying
- *medical crisis
- *divorce, adding to a family
- *advanced Christian Caring



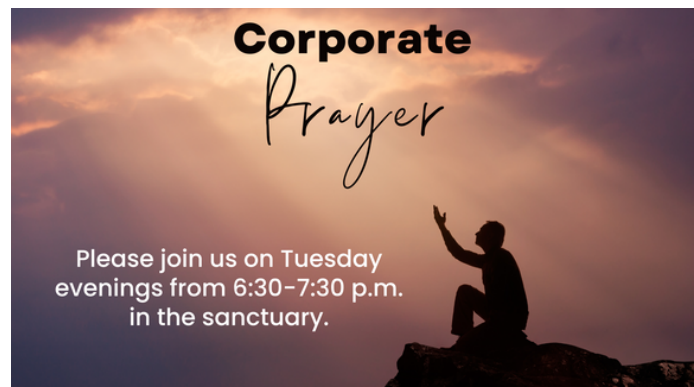
There are seven different continuing education nights. I am looking for a couple people (or couples) for each area from our congregation. If you have experience with any of these areas, here is what it would entail: attend a session for 15-20 minutes to answer questions the Stephen Ministers might have with a care receiver who may be going through a similar situation.
 You will **not** be leading the training (unless you feel God is nudging you).

If you are willing to help with these training areas, please call/text me,
 Sandy Seedorf at 701-426-9802 or
 E-mail me at: sandyseedorf1@gmail.com

With the holidays behind us and Charity moving forward into a new year, if you feel you have some things you still need to deal with, please call the office and ask for a Stephen Minister. Call the office if you'd like someone to pray once with you. Whether you have a Stephen Minister or a Prayer Minister, Charity Lutheran would like you to know that the Church is visiting you and cares deeply about your well-being.

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.*"



2023 Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes are available on tables by the office. If you don't see one for you and would like some, please call Judy in the church office.

January Events

The Annual Meeting of the Voters' Assembly Sunday, January 8

The Annual Meeting of the Voters' Assembly will take place following the 11:00 a.m. service on Sunday, January 8. A light lunch will be served and childcare will be provided. The agenda includes approval of the budget and election of the following candidates:

Vision Council: Craig Lohstreter and Ray Eckroth, nominees.*

*Dennis Simenson and Matt Kaldor - appointments to ratify.

Nominating Committee: Jerry Walz, Randy Traynor, and Mike Smith, nominees.

Trust Fund Committee: Nominees yet to be presented.



WOW Resumes Wednesday, January 11

2023 WEDNESDAY NIGHT
WOW Schedule

5:00 - 6:00 PM WOW Meal

6:15 - 7:15 PM WOW Kids (Nursery - 5th)
Middle School (6th-8th)

7:30 - 9:00 PM High School (9th-12th)

chqifly

Amazing Grays

The Amazing Grays will meet Tuesday, January 10 at 6:00 p.m. for a catered dinner.



Louise Potocki joined the AARP Speakers Bureau in 2019 and she will be giving a presentation. She retired from the United States Postal Service in 2014 after 32 years. The title of her presentation is "Six Pillars of Brain Health."

Please let Renee Walz know if you plan to attend by Sunday evening, January 8, so she can order food Monday morning, January 9. Please RSVP to Renee at 400-1201 by text or phone call.

Pinochle Group

The Pinochle Group will meet Friday, January 20 at 6:00 p.m. Reserve a spot by texting John Seedorf at 701-426-9768.



Quilting Group

The Quilting Group will meet Saturday, January 28 at 9:00 a.m. Please join us as we make graduate quilts for May 2023. We will meet from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. in the Gazebo. Contact Liz Landis at 258-1228 in the main office for more information.



Upcoming Adult Study

Thursdays

40 Days Through the Bible

We will be using a book written by Lysa Terkeurst called 40 Days through the Bible...the answers to your deepest longings. We will not do the study in the full 40 days...but we will venture into the chapters laid out for us. Genesis to Revelation! Let us come together in great excitement and longing to "Seek ye first His Kingdom!" Introduction to the class: Thursday January 5th, 9:30-11am Schedule to follow. Books will be available at that time. Facilitator Shelley Traynor



Congratulations Al Jaeger

Congratulations to Al Jaeger on his successful 30-year career as North Dakota's Secretary of State. It was also 30 years ago that Al and Kathy moved to Bismarck from Fargo and joined Charity Lutheran after he won that first election in 1992. According to Al, he's been "extremely blessed to have this opportunity...and people in North Dakota have been very good to me."

Al has served at Charity in a number of capacities, but we've all recognized his mustached face each Sunday, faithfully organizing and leading the usher corps the past three decades. We wish Al all the best in his retirement, with more time to spend with his kids and grandkids.

January Youth Events

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



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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



New Sunday Schedule

Beginning January 15th

TIME FOR
FELLOWSHIP
FOLLOWING THE
SERVICE.

9:30 a.m. Worship
10:45 a.m. Sunday School
**10:45 a.m. Adult Class in
Sanctuary**

***there will be supportive
options available during the
service for kids and families.