



January 2024



Pastor Ron Dahle

GOOD NEWS

From Pastor Ron Dahle

Epiphany in the Church Year

Once again, I am turning to the Church Year Calendar. I know you have heard about the song, the "12 days of Christmas." We often stop celebrating Christmas the day after Christmas Day. But some of us leave the decorations out for the full 12 days of Christmas. Then at the end of the 12 days, we celebrate a Christian holiday called Epiphany.

Epiphany is what might be called a manifestation of God, or a way that God reveals what God is doing to restore God's relationship with a 'fallen' world. The first Epiphany in the New Testament is centered on the birth of Jesus.

In the Church calendar, when Christmas comes to an end, we celebrate the Christian holiday when two things are brought to mind. The Wise Men from the East arrive and worship Jesus, and present their gifts. In addition, the next day is celebrated the Baptism of Jesus.

The 'Wise Men' represent the first evidence that Jesus came to all people, Jews and Gentiles alike. The Baptism reveals that the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus, and the Father spoke of Jesus as the Beloved Son! So, through these events, God reveals the start of a complete restoration of the whole of creation back to God. In short, into the 'pre-fallen' condition. When you come to faith in Jesus, God restores your relationship to Him.

After the Sundays after the Epiphany, we celebrate the Transfiguration of our Lord. After that the Lenten Season begins.

The purpose of the Church calendar is to make sure the Church presents all the Epiphanies of Jesus revealed in Scripture. Therefore, we do not miss out on any part of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. God's purpose of restoration is completed in Jesus.

Jesus told the Disciples that when he returns to the Father, that the Father, in the name of Jesus, would send another advocate, the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit is to call us to faith in Jesus through the Proclamation of the Gospel.

(continued on page 4)

EVENTS

***Office Closed January 1

Happy New Year

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

Sunday, January 7
Annual Meeting
11:00 a.m.

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

Saturday, January 13
Quilting Group
9:00 a.m.

Sunday, January 14
Sunday School/Luther Resumes
10:45 a.m.

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

Executive Director of Ministries Doug Leet

Thanksgiving, Peace, Hope

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with *thanksgiving*, present your requests to God. And the *peace* of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV-italics mine) We see these two verses in our Sunday bulletin each week at the top of the tear-off section on the prayer page. Charity has much to be thankful for. We just celebrated the birth of Jesus, our Savior, in a wonderful Christmas Eve service led by Pastor Ron Dahle and the worship team. It was beautiful. Thanks be to God!

We are in an important and necessary season in our congregation at Charity. And while we are thankful for the interim pastoral ministry that we had for over a year, it is now, under Pastor Ron’s guidance in worship on Sunday (and more), that we are experiencing increased stability and healing. I know he’s already looking forward to the season of Lent and preparing us for the celebration of our Lord’s saving work through his suffering, death on the cross, and resurrection on Easter morning.

Almost halfway into Charity’s life (Charity will be 45 in 2024), its two pastors, led by Pastor Bob Nordvall, shepherded us through a process that culminated in the leaving of our very denomination in 2001, and the adopting of a new constitution in 2003. In the words of interim Pastor Brad Miller, in his very first Charity newsletter article, “Many of you have never read the Book of Concord of 1580.

Your next called pastor needs to have both studied, accepted, and pledged faithful adherence to it. As a member of the LCMC (especially a relatively early member), 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.”

I am reminded of a couple wise quotes from Pastor Steve Lien, the former LCMC Coordinator for Pastoral Ministry, when he visited Charity in 2017. He said: 1) “The important is rarely urgent, and the urgent is rarely important.” and 2) “The only thing worse than having no pastor, is having the wrong pastor.” I am also reminded of the encouragement patriot Benjamin Martin received in the movie *The Patriot*, from both his son, Gabriel, and his commanding officer, Harry Burwell. Separately, they each admonished him to “stay the course” for “the cause.” I, too, encourage Charity to “stay the course” in its efforts to find the “right” pastor to shepherd this congregation.

Things have settled down at Charity and we are experiencing a sense of normalcy in our congregation, which we so desperately need. By the time you read this, Charity will have started advertising again for someone to help lead our children’s and youth ministry. And we will also be preparing to hold our 2023 annual meeting of the Voters’ Assembly in early January, where a realistic budget will be presented that considers our current size and giving amounts. This coming year will present opportunities for casting some vision for Charity to live out the gospel in both the youth and adult areas of ministry. Please continue to take all opportunities “for prayer and petition, with *thanksgiving*”



Doug Leet

Financial Report

Nov. Actual Income	\$45,624
Nov. Budgeted Income	\$73,849
Difference	\$28,225

Nov. Actual Income	\$45,624
Nov. Actual Expenses	\$40,315
Difference	\$5,309

YTD Actual Income	\$579,237
YTD Budgeted Income	\$812,340
Difference	\$233,103

YTD Actual Income	\$579,237
YTD Actual Expenses	\$554,518
Difference	\$24,719

Memorials & Gifts

Trust Fund:
In Memory of Butch Wangen by Faye Wangen

Spud Club
David Price - In Memory of Diane Price & Thankoffering for children Denine, Mathen, David, Megan and Grandchildren Sophia, Ollie Al Jaeger
Faye Wangen

as we continue to move forward. While this process we’re going through may seem sufferingly slow at times, we need to remember that “slow and steady wins the race.”

In closing, let us be reminded of the words of the apostle Paul, “Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces *hope*, and *hope* does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” Romans 5:3-4 (NIV-italics mine)

Vision Council Update

Greetings from the Vision Council. It is just a couple of days till Christmas as I am writing this and what a great December we have had so far. It looks like we will have good roads for travel in our region anyway and that is always a blessing.

As we close out 2023, I would also like to thank Dennis Simenson (Vision Council), Wayne Levang (Trust Fund), and Mike Smith (Nominating Committee) for their service on their respective committees. The time and effort you have put in serving our congregation has been a blessing and I encourage all of you to thank them when you see them.

Some of the highlights of the December Vision Council meeting were approval of the part-time Youth Coordinator position and job description, finalizing 2024 budget for members approval, discussion with Call Committee regarding prospective Pastor candidate, and formalizing the Charity Lutheran Education Ministry into a core ministry team.

Many of you may not have heard much about the volunteers that stepped forward to form the education committee. In the absence of a settled or full-time interim Pastor this group stepped up to fill in the gap to find, review, and approve curriculum for both adult and youth programming going into the WOW season. This ministry created out of an immediate need has been so successful the Vision Council would like to formalize and define their process as a core ministry team. In Article 10 of the By-laws a core ministry team is one defined by the Vision Council that has a ministry, which is long-term and essential to the mission, vision, and values of the congregation.

We are also continuing corporate prayer every Tuesday at 6:30 PM into 2024. I am praying you all have a merry, blessed, and safe Christmas staying grounded in the real meaning of it all celebrating the birth of our Savior. Hope to see you all at the Annual Meeting Jan 7, 2024.

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.*"

Corporate Prayer resumes January 9.



From Pastor Ron Dahle

(continued from page 1)

When we come to faith in Jesus, which is a Gift from God, our sins are forgiven, and the natural result of this life of faith is good works. Ephesians 2:8-10 spell this out in the simplest terms. We are unable to come to faith in Jesus by our own initiative. It must come to us from outside of us – from God. God has completed this through the Work of Jesus – life, death, resurrection, and ascension.

We must give thanks and praise to God for the tender love, and grace poured out upon us during the Epiphany Season, so that we are prepared for the Lenten Journey. Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Amen.

-Pastor Ron Dahle

Charity Call Committee Report

After advertising for a pastor since last January, the Call Committee welcomed our first applicant interested in visiting Charity. Pastor Jon Aamodt and his wife, Cheryl, spent the first weekend in December in Bismarck, meeting many Charity members and preaching at the Sunday service. Three of his four adult children and their families also visited, and it was a pleasure to get to know all of them.

During their visit, Pastor Jon and Cheryl had lengthy meetings with the Call Committee and the Vision Council. After returning to their home in Portland, Oregon, Pastor Jon said he and his family felt the anointing presence of the Holy Spirit during our worship service and a warm welcome by everyone.

We want to thank everyone who showed such great hospitality to the Aamodts during their visit.

Since his visit, Pastor Aamodt notified us in late December that he is no longer interested in being considered for the pastor position at Charity. We wish him and his family all the best as they look for other ministry opportunities outside of the Portland area.

We appreciate hearing from every one of you during this process. In addition to these monthly newsletter reports, we gave reports at the October 1 and December 4 forums and will present another one at the January 7 annual meeting.

As the Call Committee moves forward, we will continue to reach out to candidates who have pastoral experience in a congregation of a size comparable to Charity. We will re-post the listing that was previously on the LCMC website and also add it to the Charity website. We also revised the job description and the updated one will be included in this listing.

Some of you have suggested names of pastors we should reach out to, and we will do that. We also encourage everyone else to mention this opening to pastors you know from other LCMC congregations and let us know how we can assist in outreach.

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January Events

The Annual Meeting of the Voters' Assembly Sunday, January 7

The Annual Meeting of the Voters' Assembly will follow the 9:30 a.m. service on **Sunday, January 7**. There will be a brief time for fellowship with fruit and muffins before the meeting. The agenda includes approval of the budget and election of the following candidates.


Vision Council: Mike Fluharty, Sonja Murray

Trust Fund Committee: Nancy Jensen, Don Nordquist

Nominating Committee: Randy Traynor, Deb Uline, Jerry Walz



WOW Resumes Wednesday, January 3



WOW
WORD ON WEDNESDAY

5:00-5:45 p.m. WOW Meal
6:15-7:30 p.m.
Preschool-5th grade: WINGS program
Middle School (6th-8th grade): Confirmation
9th grade-Adults: The Bethel Bible Series
9th-12th grade: High School Youth Group

Amazing Grays

The Amazing Grays will meet Tuesday, January 9 at 6:00 p.m. for a catered meal. The speaker is yet to be determined.

Please let Renee know if you plan to attend (701-400-1201) by Sunday, January 7 so she can order food.



Pinochle Group

The Pinochle Group will meet Friday, January 19 at 6:00 p.m. Reserve a spot by texting John Seedorf at 701-426-9768.

February 16 is the next evening.



Quilting Group

The Quilting Group will meet Saturday, January 13 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. **February 24 is the next meeting.**



Call Committee Report

(continued from page 4)

Here are a few frequent questions we have been asked:

Q. What does the Charity Constitution require for pastors we call?

A. Article VI requires our pastors "accept and pledge faithful adherence to the confessions of the congregation as set forth in the Preamble and Article II" and be clergy of the LCMC.

Q. What is involved in becoming "clergy of the LCMC?"

A. The LCMC certifies pastors based on several requirements, including a Master's in Divinity degree from an accredited theological school and internship or residency experience in a congregation. Approximately 30 percent of the pastors certified by the LCMC received their degrees from non-Lutheran seminaries.

Charity has not called a pastor who was previously unknown in our faith community for 25 years, so much of this has been new territory to navigate. Over the past two-and-a-half years, the Call Committee has been uplifted by your prayers and has felt God's guidance during this process.

Please continue your prayers as this process moves forward.

In closing, here are three prayers that are included in the 31-Day Prayer Guide for our pastor search that some of you have been following in recent months. May they guide us as we move ahead in 2024.

Day 11 -- Jeremiah 29:13, James 4:8 - Pray the pastor search period will be a time the church learns to seek God Himself more than just a new pastor. "Lord, teach us to draw closer to Jesus and trust Him as the true head of the church, and not in man."

Day 16 -- Ephesians 4:1-6 - Pray that we are prepared to make the necessary changes to embrace a new day of ministry, "Lord, we understand that a new pastor always means changes. Help us to be prepared to change and grow with graciousness and unity so we can be the church You have called us to be."

Day 31 -- Colossians 3: 12-17 - Above all, pray that God's will would be done through the entire process of finding a new pastor for Charity Lutheran Church. Pray that the Holy Spirit will give everyone involved in this process wisdom and peace. Pray that God will show us who He is calling to Charity Lutheran Church.

Call Committee members - Laura Kourajian, Scott Carter, Sarah Erickson, Clark Johnson and Andrea Collin

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 2023. Donate now and your name will remain on this list for the year!!

2023 Spud Club Members

Mark & Lisa Aamodt
 Duane & Darlene Bentz
 Scott & Connie Carter
 Alvina Fueller
 Ken & Connie Geiger
 Jeff & Rose Gitter
 Donavon Hatzenbuehrer
 Al Jaeger
 Dave & Nancy Jensen
 Matt & Penny Kaldor
 Georgia Kingsbury
 Chad & Laura Kourajian
 Mark & Liz Landis
 Dave & Barb Lee
 Doug & Rhonda Leet
 Wayne & Marie Levang
 Craig & Sandra Lohstreter
 Brad & Pam Miller
 Don & Kathy Nordquist
 Dave Price
 Ken & Julie Slag
 John & Sandy Seedorf
 Norlyn & Patty Swenson
 Jerry & Renee Walz
 Faye Wangen
 Kathy Wermager

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

North Dakota Family Alliance

Mark Jorritsma, NDFA



Dear Friends,

A lot has happened in both the ND legislature and with North Dakota Family Alliance, and we'd like to catch you up. The 2023 legislative session was unlike any other we've experienced. We were blessed with amazing wins for pro-life and pro-family values. We helped pass 11 gender-related bills, a bill prohibiting drag shows in public where children can see them, legislation that protects North Dakotans' religious freedom from government interference, a major life bill that updated and solidified multiple pro-life laws, a bill prohibiting obscenity in children's sections of public and school libraries, one that increased funding for the Alternatives to Abortion program, and many more. We are particularly thankful that both of the Girls' Fairness in Sports bills passed, especially after failing last session.

How did all this happen? There were several things that enabled these wins. First, we worked hard during the session on your behalf. We were able to work on 50 bills, were blessed to win 83% of them, and even helped you send 45,342 individual emails to legislators through our automated email system. Second, you responded with prayers, Call-to-Action requests, and financial support. Third, our legislators and Governor Burgum made some tough decisions, and with a few exceptions, voted in a manner consistent with your and my values. Finally, and most importantly, God blessed our work. Our organization is simply one channel for God's work in North Dakota's political world and we were once again privileged to be part of it during this legislative session.

So, what lies ahead? NDFA will be focused on three areas over the coming year: events, church engagement, and our new Legislative Academy. Regarding events, we recently held a prayer conference that was incredible, and we will be holding our 2024 Pro-Life Conference on January 22 (tickets at ndfamilyalliance.org). The even better news is that the conference will be held here in Bismarck!

Second, we will help churches across ND respond to policy issues and have a strong voice in the creation and advocacy of policy. We will also be launching our Church Ambassador program next year, so stay tuned for that. Charity Lutheran is way ahead of most churches in North Dakota when it comes to engaging in public policy and protecting biblical values, and we deeply appreciate it (you are a model church we hold up for other congregations!)

Finally, we plan to host our very first Legislative Academy, which will be an annual program for legislators that covers subjects such as how our country was founded on biblical principles, strategies on how to draft and get bills into law, and how a legislator's faith can best be integrated into their policy decisions.

We'd like to thank Charity Lutheran for all the ways in which you've supported us. We can't do this without you. These wins during the 2023 session were YOUR wins. May God continue to bless your church and NDFA as we strive to do His ministry here on earth.

Mark Jorritsma, NDFA





JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

January 1
Janae Geiger

January 3
Joel Anderson
Jim Skjod

January 4
Brad Heim

January 6
Courtney Seedorf

January 7
Mike Rowe

January 11
Kaleb Anderson
Brooklyn Becker
Ryan Okerson

January 12
Christian Lubbers

January 13
Khalin Dendy

January 14
Ellengton Hill

January 16
Dominic Chamley
Lindsey Robinson

January 17
Steel Allen

January 18
Bob Nelson

January 19
Joseph Becker

January 20
Jan Greenstein
Kerry Mikkelsen

January 21
Dennis Torgerson

January 25
Sydney Weaver

January 26
Janet Mitzel
Sharon Schock

January 27
Melissa Oakland

January 28
Autumn Senske

January 30
Donavon Hatzenbuhler

January 31
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 23 - Craig & Lisa Keidel
January 24 - Robert & Maew Bauer



stephen at Charity Lutheran MINISTRY.



Our Stephen Ministers are here to help! Please call the church office at 258-1228 if you would like more information.

A mouse, looking through a hole in the wall, sees the farmer and his wife open a package. He was terrified to see that it was a mousetrap. He ran to the patio to warn everyone.

-"There is a mousetrap at home!"

The chicken that was cackling and digging says: "excuse me, Mr. Mouse, I understand that it is a big problem for you, but it does not hurt me at all."

So, the rodent went to the lamb and he says the same thing: "Excuse me Mr. Mouse, but I don't think I can do more than ask for you in my prayers."

The mouse went to the cow and she said: "But am I in danger? I think not!" said the cow. The mouse returned to the house, worried and dejected to face the farmer's mousetrap.

That night a great noise was heard like that of the mousetrap catching its victim, the woman ran to see what she had caught.

In the dark she did not see that the mousetrap caught the tail of a poisonous snake.

The speedy snake bit the woman, the farmer immediately took her to the hospital, she came back with a high fever.

The farmer to comfort her prepared a nutritious soup, grabbed the knife and went to find the main ingredient: the chicken; Since the woman did not get better, friends and neighbors went to visit them, the farmer killed the lamb to feed them, the woman did not get better and died.

And in the end, the husband sold the cow to the slaughterhouse to cover the funeral expenses.

The next time someone tells you about their problem and you think that it doesn't affect you because it's not yours and you don't pay attention to it, think twice, "he who doesn't live to serve, doesn't serve to live".

The world is not going badly because of the wickedness of the bad, but because of the apathy of the good.

So when someone needs you for their problems, give them your hand or give them a word of encouragement.

May you never lack empathy!

Advent Family Fun Night



It was an all-around wonderful Advent Family Fun Night with all of the activities and the meal. We would like to extend a sincere thank you to the planners and volunteers for their time and effort put in to prepare and execute this event. The church was bustling with people. If you would like to see more photos from the event, please go to our Facebook page.



Christmas Carol Sing-Along



GriefShare Group

This was the final meeting of GriefShare. Attendees lit a candle and brought photos and/or memorial items to share.



Youth Ski Trip

**BOTTINEAU
SKI TRIP**
ENJOY WINTER WITH US



19-21 JANUARY, 2024

WE WILL BE STAYING AT LAKE METIGOSHE CHRISTIAN CENTER. BREAKFAST AND DINNER WILL BE PROVIDED. YOUTH WILL NEED LUNCH AND SNACK MONEY.
**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO CHARITY LUTHERAN
COST IS \$180**

**CHARITY YOUTH
4TH -12TH GRADE**



**SCAN QR CODE
TO REGISTER!**

We are looking forward to a youth ski trip for Charity youth in grades 4-12 in January! If you have a child who would like to go on the ski trip, please scan the QR code to fill out the form. The cost of the trip is \$180.00 and checks are payable to Charity Lutheran.

Baby Jesus Christmas Party



We celebrated with cake, hot cocoa, and FUN!



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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U.S. Postage PAID
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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

WOW **WORD ON WEDNESDAY**

5:00-5:45 p.m. WOW Meal

6:15-7:30 p.m.

Preschool-5th grade: WINGS program

Middle School (6th-8th grade): Confirmation

9th grade-Adults: The Bethel Bible Series

9th-12th grade: High School Youth Group