

# Bismarck-Mandan Area United Church of Christ

1200 E Highland Acres Rd ~ 701-223-2915 ~ office@uccbismarck.org ~ www.uccbismarck.org ~ Like us on Facebook

## November 2020

### A GLOBAL MINISTRY CHURCH

## Prayer Space on Election Night

by Rev. Gretchen Deeg, Pastor

We have been living in the midst of a crisis for most of 2020. Despite the fact that we may now be use to wearing masks and physical distancing, I know that the stress of unsettled social norms and living in a pandemic continues to take a toll on each of you. Some of you have loved ones who are ill or who are continuing to experience lasting effects of COVID-19 on their health. Towards the end of last month, our church family and community experienced the immense economic effects of the pandemic first hand when the residential program at Charles Hall Youth and Family Services closed its doors. For the past few months, your mailboxes have been flooded with campaign ads and on November 3, we will experience one of the most divided Presidential Elections in our lives.

When our faith ancestors were living in times of ongoing stress and crisis, they turned to God in prayer through song and poetry. It is out of periods of crisis that we get the books of Lamentations, Psalms, and many others. On **Tuesday, November 3 from 7pm – 9pm**, we are offering a prayer space for you to intentionally engage in prayer on election night after the polls close. This will be a space to disconnect from technology and news, sit on holy ground, offer prayers, and intentionally be in the presence of God. This will be an open time during which you can come and go as it best fits your spiritual and emotional needs. Written prayers and a finger labyrinth will be provided in the bulletin for you to use as you wish. We hope it is a space for you to center yourselves in your identities as children of God and bearers of love even in the midst of difficult times.

Remember even beyond election night, that if you are feeling stressed or anxious, you are not alone. Your church family is here for you. Individuals are at the church ready to reach out with weekly or monthly phone calls. I am available by phone, text, email, or video conferencing. There are free tools and professionals at your disposal to help you manage the stress of these times. Despite needing to physically distance, you do not need to be socially isolated. See page 4 for details on free support resources for anyone through Project Renew.

### OUR LIFE TOGETHER



### UCC's 66<sup>th</sup> Birthday!

Take time to celebrate and throw a birthday party at home on Nov. 14 to celebrate Bismarck UCC's 66<sup>th</sup> birthday! Send pictures of your party to gretchen@uccbismarck.org



Join us online as we celebrate all we have to be thankful for with our ecumenical church partners.

Wednesday, November 25, 2020  
6 PM at [uccbismarck.org/worship](http://uccbismarck.org/worship)



### Christmas Gifts

Give a gift that keeps giving this Christmas by donating to our sister school in East Timor in honor of a loved one. We have some beautiful Christmas cards to send to the person for whom you are making a gift donation. Each card has a minimum \$5 donation. Contact the church office for more info.

**Worship with us every Sunday at 10:00 AM | Bible Study ~ Every Friday at 8:30 AM**

# Vision Statement

Adopted January 2016

**The Bismarck-Mandan UCC  
is a thriving church transforming our  
lives and community:**

- Where all are unconditionally welcomed, affirmed, accepted and loved;
- Where the good in every person is recognized and their talents are encouraged to be shared;
- Where children, youth, and adults learn that God is love and all are welcome to freely explore spirituality in a safe and nurturing environment;
- Where we can bring our personal needs and struggles and count on support from our church family – which is the loving family we all deserve;
- Where powerful messages inspire and challenge us to be caring and compassionate to all – in our church, community, and world, seeking opportunities to put our faith into action with courage to go beyond what we think we can do;
- Where we embrace the still-speaking God and live in today's world.



## LIVING OUR VISION HIGHLIGHT

*"Where powerful messages inspire and challenge us to be caring and compassionate to all – in our church, community, and world."*

For 55 years, we have reached out to at-risk youth through the mission of Charles Hall Youth and Family Services. In October, we raised \$2,565 to support the final work of the residential services of CHYFS. May the lives CHYFS have touched and the legacy of the residential program continue to inspire us to go beyond what we think we can do.

**"On the day I called, you answered me,  
you increased the strength of my soul."**

– Psalm 138:3



## Council Corner

by Mike Stein, Moderator

I believe our cool weather finally arrived. This is one season I am not looking forward too.

We are in unprecedented times. As the cold and flu season approaches and the COVID numbers continue to rise we need to be very careful. During these winter months we have moved the church service inside. I would like to ask for everyone's help. As we hold worship inside, we need to be very diligent in our social distancing and wearing of our face mask. The face mask should be worn throughout the entire church service. We will need to social distance as we enter and leave the church. I would like to ask everyone to sanitize their hands as they enter the church. If you or someone in your household is not feeling well, I would encourage you to stay home.

We will continue to stream our church service online. If the numbers continue to increase there will be a possibility that we will discontinue the inside service and just stream worship online.

Our main concerns during this time is the safety of you and Pastor Gretchen. We do need to take this pandemic serious. By now we all know of someone who has tested positive. It seems that this virus affects people differently.

These are stressful times! I would encourage anyone who needs assistance in any manner to reach out to your loved ones or contact the church office. My cell number is 701-391-8128.

I am looking forward to the better times that are ahead of us. I have a feeling sitting and enjoying fellowship in a safe environment will bring a new meaning to all of us.

Again, we thank you for your support. Please be safe! God Bless!

## Words to Live By

by Camille Grothier

Like many of our Church Family, I start my day with a short reading from my favorite devotional. This devotional is especially dear to me since it is a gift from one of my Bible Study Buddies. Today's theme is "Let Go, Let God". Yes, we have all heard this one before, but it struck me as especially poignant for our changed life style today. Whenever I venture out, I have a mask on and I pretend to cough if anyone without a mask is too near me for comfort (OK, laugh but it works) and it occurred to me this is a new 'norm' that is likely to be with us for quite some time. It also occurred to me that it's OK because God is as God has always been, with us. It's OK to let go of the fear or anxiety that may have assault us these days, God can handle whatever we choose to lift up to God to handle. Letting go is not easy, but it is possible...we need to reinforce the TRUST we have in the Holy One. It truly is OK to "Let Go, Let God".

### FINANCIAL STATUS

January 1 to August 31, 2019

#### Revenue

##### General Offerings

Actual = \$ 107,179

##### Other Income (Dedicated, Earned)

Actual = \$ 10,551

#### Expenses

Actual = \$ 118,429

Total Revenue = 117,730

Total Expenses = \$ 118,429

**NET ACTIVITY = \$ -699**

### SUPPORT OF OUR MISSION PARTNERS IN 2020

East Timor Education Fund	\$ 1,112
Charles Hall Youth Services	\$ 269
Our Church's Wider Mission	\$ 7,480
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$ 315
Strengthen the Church	\$ 50
Neighbors in Need	\$ 70
The Christmas Fund	\$
<b>Total Shared Ministry</b>	<b>\$ 9,296</b>

## Three Great Loves 2021 Pledge Campaign

by Pamela Clark-Stein, Stewardship Chair

"Three Great Loves," a shared initiative of United Church of Christ (UCC) congregations, conferences and the national UCC, represents a church community of more than 5,000 churches and nearly one million members across the U.S. This initiative reflects the deep purpose, mission, and vision of the UCC.

On November 1, the Bismarck-Mandan Area United Church of Christ kicks off the Three Great Loves pledge campaign. It aligns beautifully with our vision of being a church that "transforms lives and community" through the love of God.

We need your help and commitment of financial support to embrace and make real the **Three Great Loves**:

Love of Neighbor  
Love of Children  
Love of Creation



Your Stewardship and Mission Committee will be reaching out to members over the next few weeks to encourage the sharing of personal stories and examples of the ways our church impacts the Love of Neighbor, Love of Children, and Love of Creation in your eyes — and what our church means to you and your loved ones. This is yet another way you can be involved in making our 2021 pledge campaign a success. And please feel free to contact Pastor Gretchen, me or any member of your Stewardship and Mission Committee if you'd like to share your story, through a written testimony or a video recording. There is always joy in sharing and sharing your personal story can play an important role in our 2021 Great Loves pledge campaign!

## Deacon's Greetings

by Harold Karch, Deacon's Chair

We hope this letter finds you all in good health and staying connected with your church family. The Deacons wish to say **"Thank You"** to everyone in the congregation for taking the message of Christ, and the Church with us; and expressing it to others in the way we live our lives. This is a true expression of our faith in Jesus Christ.

Please take advantage of the weekly connector calls to express any ideas or needs for help, that the church may provide, during this challenging time.

And last, but not least, Jack's Food Pantry is another way we can fulfill the church's mission in our community. Thank you all for your continued support.

God's blessing to you all from your Board of Deacons,  
Carol Baber, Sandra Domagala, Harold Karch, Darlene Kinnischtzke, Loren Knoll, Murrae Kramer, and James Mandigo.



# Primrose Ministry

by Darcy Avery, Coordinator

It is such a pleasure to work with the Primrose staff and residents as we provide spiritual support the first and fifth Wednesdays of each month. On October 7<sup>th</sup>, eleven residents attended the Primrose Ministries service. I asked Virginia Luger, a resident, to help with communion. She proudly wore her Deacons necklace to symbolize this service. I presented the scriptures, message, prayers and music. This is such an intimate family fellowship.

I invite anyone who loves seniors and loves sharing their faith with them, to contact Dale Carmen, Ken Trana, Marcia Lerberg or myself to let us know you would like to assist. We would be thrilled to let you know what this service entails. We plan to have our next service on Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> with Marcia Lerberg serving. Linda Miller, activity director, keeps us in the loop on Covid-19 restrictions. We are so happy that we still can continue this service, and as of this writing Primrose remains Covid-19 free.

## PROJECT renew

Project Renew is partnered with Lutheran Social Services of ND to provide free virtual group counseling sessions to anyone in the state of North Dakota who has been impacted in any way by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Grief and Loss During Covid-19

Losing a loved one is always difficult, but COVID-19 has made grieving much more complicated.

*Mondays at 6:30 pm CST*

### Baby, Let's Talk

Parenting is hard in general, but becoming a parent in the middle of a pandemic is unprecedentedly hard.

*Tuesdays at 1:00 pm CST*

### High Risk, High Anxiety

"High Risk, High Anxiety" is a weekly support group for high-risk individuals as they navigate life during COVID-19.

*Thursdays at 6:30 pm CST*

### Educator Support Groups

It's not the school year you thought it would be. Let's talk about it.

*Mondays at 4:00 pm CST starting November 2, 2020*

Visit [projectrenew.nd.gov](http://projectrenew.nd.gov) for additional COVID-19 resources.

## Sponsor a Sunday

Thank you to our many sponsors! There are just a few more opportunities for this year:

- ☐ November 1
- ☐ November 8
- ☐ November 22
- ☐ November 29
- ☐ December 6
- ☐ December 13
- ☐ December 20
- ☐ December 27

Contact the church office if you would like to sponsor one of these open Sundays. Sponsorship is \$500 and can be done by individuals or groups.

## Ongoing Classes

### Friday Morning Bible Study

Dive deep into the weekly scripture! This dedicated group meets every Friday at 8:30 AM on Zoom for Bible study and fellowship. All are welcome.

### Confirmation: Year 1

Confirmation students are meeting for in-person lessons the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month and engaging in faith practices on a daily basis. Contact Pastor Gretchen if you are interested in joining Confirmation.

### Interested in leading a class?

Contact Pastor Gretchen (223-2915) or any member of Christian Ed

## Friend of Medicine Award



Bismarck UCC member, Kirby Kruger, has for being chosen by the NDMA Executive Committee for the **2020 Friend of Medicine Award** for

his contributions to ND during the COVID pandemic. Kirby has worked for the Department for 30 years and has been a tireless advocate for public health. Congratulations Kirby and thank you for your leadership during these times!

## Ministry & Fellowship

### UCC Choir

Craig DeVos, Choir Director

Due to the ongoing virus we will be looking for pianists, organists and string instrument players for our services. We will not have singing at this time as the virus cases are still on the rise.

### Mayflower Circle

This women's fellowship group meets online every second Thursday of the month (September – May) at noon. Mayflower Circle leads various ministries throughout the year including numerous fundraisers, funeral luncheons, annual rummage sale, and others. Join us this month on Thursday, **Nov. 12th at Noon.**

### Knitting Group & Threads of Love

During the continued pandemic, our knitting and quilting groups are meeting virtually using Zoom. This month's gatherings are on **Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm.** Contact the church office for the Zoom link.

### Primrose Community Worship Team

Have a passion for serving those in care centers? This team preaches and leads socially distanced and masked worship services at Primrose Retirement Community on College Dr at 12:30pm on various Wednesdays throughout the year. Talk with Darcy Avery with interest in joining this group of worship leaders.

## Silent Auction



**Thank You** to everyone who gifted baskets, purchased baskets, and supported this year's fundraiser for CHYFS. They greatly appreciate our support and we ask that you keep them in your hearts and prayers as they finalize the closing of their residential programming due to major funding shortages during COVID.

## Charles Hall Residential Program Comes to an End

On Saturday, October, 24, Charles Hall Youth and Family Services closed its Qualified Residential Treatment Program (Q RTP) due to major funding shortages in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the residential program has closed, Charles Hall continues to operate with limited staff as the agency researches new programming opportunities. The youth unable to return to legal guardians have been moved to Home on the Range in Beach, ND or Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch in Minot and Fargo.

At the beginning of 2020, North Dakota had five Q RTP agencies serving foster care children and families across the state. With Charles Hall closing its residential program, North Dakota now has only two Q RTP facilities to serve foster care children and families struggling with major mental health and behavioral issues, as well as substance abuse and poverty. CHYFS has responded to the needs of over 5,000 at-risk youth from across North Dakota since 1965 and was founded as a mission of the United Church of Christ.

### Testimony from Former Charles Hall Youth



I'm Rosabel and I went into Charles Hall when I was 13 and 14 for 10 months. Without Charles Hall I wouldn't have become who I am today because they helped me with a lot. The staff gave me a great support system and made me realize that I wasn't a bad person I just made mistakes and that I could still be who I wanted to be.

After Charles Hall, I was put into a foster home and they actually became my forever family. I graduated high school and I now work in politics. I'm a regional manager for a political consulting firm and for most of the year I travel around the country working on campaigns and get bills and laws put on the ballot.

# Youth News



Faith-at-Home will continue for the month of November. A packet should have been delivered to your home, and if not please let the church office know so we can make arrangements to get you those supplies.



Due to the ongoing pandemic our Christmas program is going online this year. Families are invited to do a part of this year's Christmas program at home, video it, and send it to Pastor Gretchen at [gretchen@uccbismarck.org](mailto:gretchen@uccbismarck.org)

All the parts will come together in our December Mid-Week Worship services online! Please contact the church office with questions. More details will be available in your Faith-At-Home packets.



## Advent Family Service Ideas

As we approach Advent this year, we will certainly be pondering how to celebrate this joyous time while we adjust to our current normal. We have tried to come up with a few fun ideas to share the meaning of the season, and still have fun for all ages.

- Reverse Advent Calendar – Collect an item each day of Advent for Jack's Food Pantry and bring it to church the week of Christmas.
- Reach out to others around you either by mail or phone, especially those who may feel alone this season.
- Read the Christmas story together, and make a birthday cake for Jesus.
- Create handmade decorations for your home or to use as gifts.

## Thankful & grateful



The upcoming Thanksgiving holiday reminds us that it is time to look at all we have to be Thankful for even during a pandemic. Here are some great ideas to get your whole family involved in be **Thankful and Grateful** during this month.

- Every day during November, write what each of you is thankful for on a **Gratitude Pumpkin** as a great reminder and instant decoration for the month.
- Create a **Gratitude Jar** by writing down what you are thankful for on slips of paper and putting them in the jar throughout the month. On Thanksgiving Day read and reflect back on your choices.
- Create a **"Tree of Thanks"** in your home as a fall decoration. Add paper leaves with the things you are all grateful/thankful for throughout the month. Share these items during your Thanksgiving celebration.
- Create a "Wall of Gratitude" by putting up a piece of wrapping paper, and have your family write what they are thankful for throughout the month. Share these items over your Thanksgiving meal.
- As the weather gets colder it is the perfect time to snuggle up and read a story and talk about gratitude. A few fun book ideas are:
  - Llama, Llama Gives Thanks
  - Otis Gives thanks
  - The Berenstain Bears and the Prize Pumpkin
  - Bear Says Thanks
  - The Shoes

## Give Thanks, Give Cheer!



We will be hosting a Thanksgiving style reverse trick-or-treat to help gather food for Jack's Food Pantry this November. Fliers will be included in the November Faith at Home packets for families to distribute. We are asking that neighbors would place food on their doorsteps for collection in a no contact format. We are excited to carry on our reverse trick or treating tradition!



**Thank You for  
giving Bismarck  
families a safe  
place to stay!**

October 16, 2020

United Church of Christ  
100 East Highland Acres Road  
Bismarck, ND 58501

## ministry

ON THE MARGINS

Dear Friends,

In these days of 'soft openings' and 'smart restarts' I sometimes lie awake and wonder how we help the people we serve start again.

How do we help the 34 year old woman who had her first child at age 13, and the next at 15? With only a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education, she has spent the ensuing years raising her children, her extended family, and now is primary caretaker for her mother.

How do we help the 50 year old man who started drinking with his dad at age 11? It is as if his maturation froze at that age and now he is learning skills and paths of relationship more appropriate for an independent adult?

How do we help the family that has expanded their household to include 3 more adults and 6 children because of pandemic-related unemployment?

While I struggle with the questions, you have been part of the solution through your donation of \$1200.00. Thank you.

We continue to adjust our food pantry for safety and increasing household size, while retaining the laughter, ice cream treats, and community energy with which we have always been known.

We have started Open Hours twice a week in which social workers, NDSU and UMary Nursing Students, and other professionals can help people complete the myriad applications required for housing, employment, child support, educational assistance.

We have started a Women's Spirituality Group called *Hearts of Welcome* in which we offer childcare and transportation.

We are creatively reaching out to the prison and jail, collaborating with our local police department, providing emergency sheltering, and taking food and prayer out to the streets while maintaining safety for ourselves and our vulnerable populations as priority.

Thank you for making all this possible through your financial and prayerful support. We pray for you daily. We are here for you if you or your family are ever in need. We are humbly grateful that you have chosen to be partners with us in caring for others.

Kathleen Atkinson, OSB  
Director, Ministry on the Margins

*Thank you for helping a family in these days*

*Happy Birthday to our beloved members and friends!*

*May God's gift of life be a blessing to you and may your life be a blessing to others all year long.*



- |                      |                     |                   |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 01 Steve Smokey      | 11 Gail Erickson    | 20 Jordan Kramer  |
| 03 Katie Vanderlaan  | 13 Elijah Meidinger | 21 Austin Crowley |
| 04 Carol Baber       | 16 Connie Schwartz  | 21 Riley Benson   |
| 10 Marciana Mitchell | 17 Larry Heinle     | 21 Tristan Benson |
| 10 Kira Whitmore     | 17 Karen Beck       | 26 Chase Stockert |
|                      | 18 Dustin Schmidt   |                   |



*\*Please contact the church office or sign up in the narthex if you would like your birthday listed in the newsletter*

**It is time to renew our commitment for 2021!**

## **Three Great Loves**



**You should have received your Pledge Card in the mail the last week of October.**

**If you did not, please call the church at 701.223.2915.**

**Please return your Pledge Card by Sunday, November 22, 2020.**