

# 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

## March 2021

### A GLOBAL MINISTRY CHURCH

## What's It Like?

by Rev. Gretchen Deeg, Pastor

As more of our members are receiving a COVID vaccination, I have been asked more often, "What is it like at church?" I know some of you, or your family members, are counting down the days until after your vaccination and are preparing to venture back to in-person worship.

### So what is it like to worship in-person on Sundays?

It is like being in community with your church family, but with masks and social distancing. Every other pew is roped off and masks are required inside the church building. When you enter, a table is set up with hand sanitizer and bulletins. Everyone picks up their own bulletin and finds a seat in the sanctuary. Sealed communion cups are in every pew for Communion Sundays and the offering "plate" is located by the sanctuary doors. After worship, I or ushers invite people to exit the sanctuary one pew at a time to prevent a bottleneck at the doors.

### When will policies change and how will I know?

Council meets monthly to review our COVID policies. During each review, our Council considers the recommendations of the ND Department of Health, the local infection rates, the impact of our current policies on preventing viral spread and promoting healthy faith lives, the practices of other faith communities in the area, and the question of how we can best be a safe and nurturing environment for the most vulnerable among us. At major turning points in infection rates, Council has also consulted with infection control specialists for recommendations specific to our setting. Updates and a full history of changes can be found on our website at [www.uccbismarck.org/covid-19](http://www.uccbismarck.org/covid-19).

In February, Council voted to keep our in-person & online worship policies the same, but reopen the fellowship hall for small group meetings. The next Council meeting is Monday, March 8 at 5:30pm. I commend our Council members for bravely taking on this difficult task, setting aside politics, and striving to make the healthiest decisions possible for our congregation. If you have questions or wish to attend a Council meeting, please contact Moderator Mike Stein or the church office. I look forward to worshipping with you in-person or online!

### OUR LIFE TOGETHER



**Sunday Worship @ 10 AM**  
in-person & online

**Wednesday Worship @ 6 PM**  
online

This Lent, encounter Jesus in locations across North Dakota and learn new spiritual practices every Wednesday evening.

*Lent & Easter Schedule See Page 4*

### Charles Hall Update

*See Page 7*

### Keep in Touch

As the pandemic continues, we encourage you to keep in touch with our church family. Check out the newest section of our newsletter "**Featured Families**" as a great way to see what some of our families have been up to this past year.

*See page 3*

**Worship with us every Sun. at 10 AM & Wed. at 6 PM | Bible Study: Fri. 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, seeking opportunities to put our faith into action with courage to go beyond what we think we can do."*

The start of Lent brought us the opportunity to breathe life back into our ecumenical partnerships through weekly worship services co-led by UCC and ELCA clergy. Join us for these Wednesday services online at [www.uccbismarck.org/worship](http://www.uccbismarck.org/worship). Click "View More" for past services.



Hello Everyone,

At our February meeting the Council spent quite a bit of time planning for the 2021 year. A few items we will be concentrating on are:

1. The UCC Governance Model.
2. How do we grow and expand the church?
3. UCC Safety Manual

**The UCC Governance Model** – Our governance model has been in place for many years. Denominations worldwide are losing members. Society is constantly changing. Religious denominations need to make changes as society is changing. We need to compare our governance model to other models that are being used in a growing environment.

**How do we grow and expand the church** – This has been a topic of discussion for most of the churches in the Bismarck/Mandan area. Some of the technology changes we made these past 2 years has helped tremendously. The changes enhanced our communication with the community and congregation members.

**UCC Safety Manual** – I am going to be optimistic here and say hopefully we will be back inside under a new normal and enjoying fellowship by the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2021. When we are back inside, safety is our priority. We had some very talented people put together a safety manual. This manual needs to be shared with the members. There are copies of the manual laying by the church bulletin board.

We are in a position where many churches are not – and that is our building is paid off. We now need to move on to the next phase. This phase is growing the church. We will be needing everyone's help during this phase. Reviewing and possibly making changes with our governance model will be a good start. Take care & God Bless!

## Council Corner

by Mike Stein. Moderator



## Office Hours

Monday – Friday  
9 AM – 1 PM



## Daylight Savings Time

Spring ahead one hour on  
Sunday, March 14, 2021

## Jack's Food Pantry

Donations accepted during office  
hours and other times by  
appointment.

### FINANCIAL STATUS

January 1 to January 31, 2021

#### Revenue

##### General Offerings

Actual = \$10,490

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

Actual = \$ 582

#### Expenses

Actual = \$ 10,388

Total Revenue = \$ 11,072

Total Expenses = \$ 10,388

**NET ACTIVITY = \$ 684**

### SUPPORT OF OUR MISSION PARTNERS IN 2020

East Timor Education Fund	\$
Charles Hall Youth Services	\$
Our Church's Wider Mission	\$ 325
One Great Hour of Sharing	(Mar. 28)
Strengthen the Church	(Collected in June)
Neighbors in Need	\$
CROP Walk	(Collected in Oct.)
The Christmas Fund	(Collected in Dec.)
<b>Total Shared Ministry</b>	<b>\$ 325</b>

## Featured Families!



**Kyle, Autum, Wilhelm, & Opal Eisenbraun**

To start, we would like to say that we really miss our church family. The past year has been a difficult one for everybody. We have done our best to keep our minds and bodies busy. Kyle has remained very busy with his work. This we are thankful for. Early last year, we spent some time in Utah with family out in the country. This was very healing. Wil and Opal have been busy with school. Opal fills some of her spare time with dance. She was able to perform in The Nutcracker and has hopes of being in another production this spring. Wilhelm fills much of his spare time doing Taekwondo. He works hard and continues to move up. This has helped him in so many ways emotionally and physically. Autum spends much of her time helping elderly loved ones in her life and finds it so fulfilling. Through it all, what has kept us going is each other. Our faith and family bonds have deepened in extraordinary ways.



**Tove & Evan Mandigo and family (Jason, Petra, & Leah pictured)**

Here's a picture of our family room on Christmas, including our furry friends. We have pretty much stayed at home during the pandemic except for groceries and medicine. This summer we spent a lot of time in the backyard and used the pool a lot. Tove and I got our second shots in mid-February, so that is a milestone. Hope we can get out more when our immunity kicks in. I finally got virtual meeting capability to work on my laptop thanks to a tip from our good friend Jane Thomson. Tove is way ahead of me in virtual meetings.



If you have enjoyed reading the featured family section, we invite you to become involved. Give us a call or send an email, if you would like to be one of our featured families and share what you and your family have been up to this past year!

# Thank you for Sponsoring a Sunday!

February 14

## Sponsored in Memory & Recognition

In loving memory of my mother and aunt who both passed at a very young age from cancer. They faced it head-on with courage and determination, yet never lost their spirit of generosity and love for others. This is also a recognition of my youngest sister's fight with end-stage cancer – along with all loved ones and friends in our church and community who are now "fighting the fight."

## Sponsored by Pamela Clark-Stein & Michael Stein

*(Mike and Pamela joined Bismarck UCC after getting married at the UCC! Mike currently serves as our church moderator and Pamela chairs the Stewardship Committee. Both are serving as church council members.)*



February 21

## Sponsored in Memory of Parents

In loving memory of our parents, Harry & Pearl Berg and Peter & Sophie Schneider.

## Sponsored by Larry & Phyllis Schneider

*(Generous supporters of area youth, both Larry and Phyllis have been long time supporters of Charles Hall Youth & Family Services and members of this congregation. Larry currently serves on the Stewardship Committee.)*



*Sponsorships are still needed for Sundays in March & April. Call the church office to sponsor an upcoming Sunday!*

# Deacon's Greetings

by Camille Grothier, chair

Our Board met earlier this month. A big thank you to Murrae for her service to this Board and to Harold Karch for agreeing to serve one more year as a resource for me as incoming Chair. I owe the other team members an apology since I was a bit late for our meeting (I did get there in time for adjournment), and because of this, am unable to give a thorough report for this newsletter. However, that unfortunate occurrence will not be repeated. This Board consists of dedicated members who will serve our church family well. It is an honor to serve with them for the next three years!

## Lent & Easter Schedule



### Sunday Worship

Every Sunday at 10 AM in-person & online

### Wednesday Worship

Every Wednesday at 6 PM online only  
at [www.uccbismarck.org/worship](http://www.uccbismarck.org/worship)

- ❖ Feb. 16 – Ash Wednesday  
Rev. Gretchen Deeg
- ❖ Feb. 24 – "Jesus on the Road"  
Rev. Derek Harkins & Rev. Sylvia Bull
- ❖ Mar. 3 – "Jesus at the Youth Correctional Center"  
Rev. Gail Hagerty &  
Deacon Alex Benson
- ❖ Mar. 10 – "Jesus in Creation"  
Rev. Gretchen Deeg
- ❖ Mar. 17 – "Jesus on the Tractor"  
Rev. Janis Sloka
- ❖ Mar. 24 – "Jesus at Home"  
Rev. Lisa Ahlness
- ❖ Mar. 31 – "Jesus in Holy Week"  
Rev. Gretchen Deeg



## Holy Week 2021

Palm Sunday – March 28

10 AM in-person & online

Holy Wednesday – March 31

6 PM online

Maundy Thursday – April 1

6 PM in-person & online

Easter Sunday – April 4

7 AM Sunrise Service

in-person on lawn of Primrose

10 AM Easter Worship

in-person & online at UCC



## Join a Faith or Fellowship Group

### Friday Bible Study

Meets at 8:30am every Friday morning via Zoom to study the week's scriptures and deepen each other's faith development. Contact the church office for the Zoom link.

### Mayflower Circle

This women's fellowship group meets every second Thursday of the month (September – May) at noon on Zoom. Join us this month on **Thursday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at noon.**

### Knitting Group & Threads of Love

Knit, purl, tell stories, and have a great time with this group of knitters. This group meets on Tuesdays at 2pm via Zoom. March meetings on **March 2, 16, and 30.**

### Sunday Fellowship

Gather on Zoom at 11am on Sundays to catch up with each other, laugh together, and have fellowship from home. The link can be at [www.uccbismarck.org/worship](http://www.uccbismarck.org/worship)

### Primrose Ministry

Have a passion for serving those in care centers? This team preaches and leads worship services at Primrose Retirement Community at 1144 College Dr. on various Wednesdays throughout the year. Talk with Darcy Avery if you are interested in joining this group of worship leaders.



*Saturday, March 20, 2021*



## One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the UCC involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are

displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

How far would you be willing to go so that your family would have water? The prophet Isaiah declares that God's people will neither hunger nor thirst, and yet some families are walking up to 12 miles per day to get water. Often times water they collect is contaminated, therefore making them sick after all of the effort they have expended to retrieve the water. A solar-powered borehole well and water system can change all of that. With the creation of water kiosks, families can pay a nominal fee to get water and eliminate long trips to contaminated sources; and area services such as schools and hospitals are immensely helped as well. The journey for clean water begins with you. **Send or bring your OGHS to the church before Palm Sunday, March 28<sup>th</sup>.**

## Easter Flowers

In Memory or Honor of a loved one!

Orders are due Sunday, March 7<sup>th</sup>



Please make check to "UCC" and write in memo "Easter Flowers" and place in lock box by order form.

**Payment for flowers is due upon ordering.**

### Easter Lilies

6" pot - \$10

8" pot - \$20

Triple pot - \$30

### Asiatic Colored Lily - \$15

Mums - \$15

Azaleas - \$15

## Primrose Ministries News

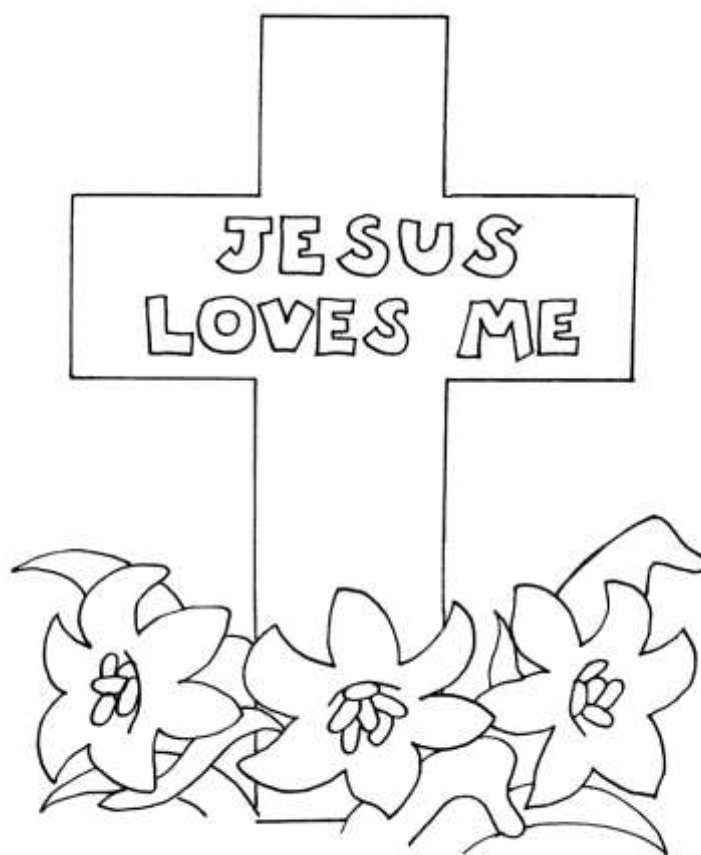
by Darcy Avery, Coordinator



Dale Carmen led the February 3 service. We had fun taking a few pictures of our church participants. Dale requested to hold a special service of Ashes for the residents on February 17. She had residents write something they wished to "let go" this Lent on paper to be burned. Palm leaves were dried and burned with these papers. The ashes were used in the service. Dale continues to serve for March 3 and 31 services. Darcy continues to lead the music using the Sunshine Songbook. Thank you, Primrose, for this beautiful shared relationship.



# Youth News



## *One Great Hour of Sharing:*

*Please return fish coin boxes to  
Bismarck UCC on Palm Sunday,  
March 28th.*

*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 Eric Pearson       | 19 Roger Ritz       |
| 02 Christopher Gustin | 23 Kenleigh Volk    |
| 06 Julie Dethloff     | 24 Cecilia Tolstedt |
| 07 Rayann Knoll       | 25 Carter Meidinger |
| 11 Ron Knutson        | 27 Nicole Balliet   |
| 13 Ken Trana          | 30 Gretchen Deeg    |
| 14 Ed Lutz            | 31 Weston Miller    |

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





## 2021: A Time to Pivot AND Begin a New Chapter IN THE Life and Legacy of Charles Hall

The COVID-19 pandemic took its toll on Charles Hall's Qualified Residential Treatment Program in the final quarter of 2020, as staff and staff family members began to experience COVID-19 directly. The end of October, the agency ceased its residential program and secured placements for youth in care. It was a difficult and sad time for all, but it was a decision that had to be made at that time.

Today, Charles Hall Youth and Family Services is still operating with five staff persons (full-time and part-time) and our agency's board of directors. Our 501(c) 3 status remains active. Charitable gifts continue to be requested and are receipted for donors' tax purposes.

Controlled liquidation of items that are no longer needed is well underway. Liquidation of selected assets will assist the agency in meeting its remaining financial obligations related to residential treatment program operations. The agency plans for additional funding support with individual donor gifts, limited federal aid, and eventually major grant funding as the agency transitions from its roots in residential care into the future.

### Potential New Strategies for Serving At-Risk Children and Families

Agency leadership is in the process of pursuing a new focus that builds on the most recent history of the past 16 years, along with the organization's longer-term history of almost six decades of service to at-risk children.

With renewed focus, we directors are considering strategic new ways to reach children with effective, deliverable programming based on Charles Hall's well-tested and research-based approach to self-esteem and moral development. Strengthening emotional resiliency and psychological security for all children, especially for those children facing challenges created by abuse, neglect, and complex trauma remains core to the work.

The agency remains dedicated to the development and dissemination of programming in the affective domain – specifically, instructional programming to equip children with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors needed to ensure emotional stability and psychological security. During the past two decades, Charles Hall has been committed to strength-based and trauma-informed practices as the agency designed unique programming to support youths' moral development, their development of integrity and character, emotional intelligence, and the psychological construct of self-esteem.

Moving forward, Charles Hall will work to pivot to continue these efforts and reach beyond residential foster care to assist children and families in new venues using different methods (e.g., technology) and building expanded partnerships. North Dakota educational institutions that have expressed interest in working with Charles Hall in 2021 include Fargo Public Schools, United Tribes Technical College, and Bismarck State College.

### Current State of Foster Care in North Dakota

During the past three years, foster care in North Dakota has experienced great change. With this change, residential programming, except for psychiatric treatment facilities, is limited and no longer a significant part of the continuum of care for high risk youth in the state's

foster care system. In addition, funding streams have changed greatly with the majority of dollars now allocated to "zones" in place of North Dakota's former county system.

### Next Steps

Charles Hall has a unique and influential history. Those who have gone before us have left a legacy that leadership staff is confident can continue. With the next six months, the agency will continue to face uncertainties with the COVID-19 pandemic. However, with controlled liquidation, securing underwriting to address current financial obligations (e.g., PPP funding and charitable support from committed donors), and intentional inquiry and strategic planning, the co-executive directors are confident that the agency will see clearly a path to an expanded future or how the agency will bring its work to an ultimate close.

The directors remain committed to Charles Hall Youth and Family Services. With faith and trust in God, as well as a great deal of hard work and continued commitment, Charles Hall can move forward to do great things.

Gayle Klopp, Executive Director

Gayla Sherman, MSW, CIT, CCTP  
Administration and Operations

Executive Director, Programs and Resource Development

