

BISMARCK-MANDAN AREA UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



2024

In Review

OUR MISSION

Share faith in Christ with others by bringing people from many backgrounds together in a spirit of openness and understanding, encouraging learning and fellowship, and living faith through service.



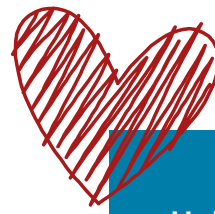
OUR VISION

Be 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 our faith in today's world.

No matter who,
no matter what,
you're welcome here.

Pastor's Note



Being part of Bismarck United Church of Christ means getting to take part in making our own and other's lives more joy-filled, meaningful, and grounded in God's love. A common phrase from visitors is that this congregation exudes welcome and love. At the start of every service, we offer God's unconditional grace in song and we seek to share God's peace with everyone. We offer visitors a jar of homemade jam made from homegrown produce and we linger after worship to connect and catch up on each other's lives. All ages assist in worship leadership and share wisdom from their life experiences. We support one another through the heavy times and we love to laugh together. Bismarck UCC is truly a faith family.

In 2024, we extended our faith family's hospitality to three Ukrainian refugee families. One family settled in Dickinson, another is living in Bismarck, and the third has been delayed. We reinforced our song that "all are welcome here" by officially becoming an Open and Affirming (ONA) church. We invited J-Mar Enterprises into our basement office space and we witnessed Communities Acting Together for Change and Hope (CATCH) out grow our smaller upstairs office space as they hired a new executive director.

We faced the divisiveness in our nation by gathering local faith communities for educational series on building bridges across differences and Christian Nationalism. We held interfaith dinners, hosted a block party, and welcomed new members. We continued our tradition of worshipping with other faith communities at least quarterly.

This was the year we updated our church photo directory and served the world through food pantry donations, backpacks for those leaving incarceration, quilt donations to camps, a hot meal of bison and ham, and finances to our mission partners, including our partnership school in East Timor. We were also blessed to hear new updates from our friends in East Timor through Rev. Jim Moos.

At Bismarck UCC, 2024 was a year of abundance. We had some major costs with a new roof and gutters, sprinkler replacement, furnace and AC unit. We grieved the passing of dear members and faced big life changes in individual's lives. Yet, we did it together and deepened our faith in God along the way. As we look towards 2025, may we do so from a place of God's abundant blessings.

Peace and blessings,
Rev. Gretchen Deeg

Bismarck

United Church of Christ
1200 E Highland Acres Rd
Bismarck, ND 58501

701-223-2915
office@uccbismarck.org

Find us on Facebook, Instagram,
and YouTube

Office Hours

Monday - Friday
8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Worship Schedule

Sunday at 10 AM

Livestream at
www.uccbismarck.org/worship

Support the Ministry

www.uccbismarck.org/donate

Emergency Pastoral Care

701-347-1235



New highlights in 2024



Spring Highlight

In response to growing political division, we co-hosted a series on skills for bridging cultural, political, and social divides. We followed it up with a movie series on Christian Nationalism and a second skill-building series in the fall.



Summer Highlight

We traveled to Rock Island, IL with 16 youth from the Northern Plains Conference to the first UCC Regional Youth Event since Covid. Our kids had a blast and said they learned to better love who they are and accept God's love.



Autumn Highlight

As we gathered in Fall, Carly Retterath gave us a tour of the new Mandan High School and Kyle Eisenbraun started what is *potentially* the first annual UCC Bowling Tournament.



Winter Highlight

We restarted "Called to Care" with 8 new leaders and hosted a Called to Care training for all UCC churches and Bismarck-area churches. We also cared for each other with a church visit to the High Tea at Garrison UCC.

Prayers for 2025: "May we all be fearless in sharing hope, peace, joy, and love with all we meet."

A note from our *Moderator*



As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude and pride for the significant strides taken by the Bismarck United Church of Christ. The year 2024 began on a monumental note with our congregation's decision to become designated as an Open and Affirming congregation. This step was the culmination of years of dedication, reflection, and hard work from our entire church family. It signifies our unwavering commitment to inclusivity and acceptance, aligning our values with our actions.

Throughout the year, we celebrated numerous successful events that brought our community closer together. Our Vacation Bible School was a resounding success, engaging children and families in faith and fellowship. The Block Party in August was another highlight, inviting neighbors to join in our celebration. In October, the Buffalo Supper brought warmth and community spirit as we shared a meal. November's Paint Party tapped into our creative sides, and the Advent Affair in December was a beautiful culmination of our year's efforts, marking the season with hope and unity.

From a financial perspective, 2024 has been a year of progress and stability. Early in 2024 we were able to pay off the roof, a major accomplishment that reflects our collective commitment and generosity. Additionally, we have made positive strides toward addressing the budget deficit, positioning us on firmer financial ground as we move forward.

Looking ahead to 2025, the council plans to prayerfully consider new ways to organize committees and projects more effectively. Sometimes, it is essential to take a step back and recharge, ensuring that our efforts are aligned with our mission and goals. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your moderator for another year. I am honored and blessed to be a part of this vibrant and loving church family. Together, we will continue to grow in faith and community.

Blessings,

Carly Retterath

Our Members

Membership 1-1-24 = 384 Membership 12-31-24 = 387

New Members – 7

- 6/15/2024 – Bryson Crannell (child of Nick & Andrea)
- 11/17/2024 – Roberto Alvarez
- 11/17/2024 – Shannon, Naima, & Franklin Fatimi
- 11/17/2024 – Andrea Rebsom
- 11/17/2024 – Faith Schwartz



Shannon, Naima, & Franklin

Confirmations – 2

- 5/19/2024 – Ella Kraft
- 5/19/2024 – Jovi Weil

Baptisms – 2

- 5/23/2024 – Dutton Lee Domagala
- 7/7/2024 – Bella Rayne Strong Bruning



Faith Schwartz

Deaths – 4

- 1/22/2024 – Lucille Ritz
- 6/19/2024 – Herb Ritz
- 9/12/2024 – Peg Schemmel
- 11/9/2024 – Vern Frederick
- 11/17/2024 – Irene Perman



Herb Ritz

Non-Member Funerals – 1

- 6/17/2024 – Jimmy Jo Adamec

Living Memorial – 1

- 11/16/2024 – Camille Grothier



Roberto Alvarez

Marriages – 1

- 9/7/2024 – Thomas & Yolanda Sitting Crow



Nayeli at block party

Removals/Transferred Out – 1

“God, we bless your holy name and feel the joy of this season. Give us the courage to LIVE the lessons Jesus taught.”

– Prayer for 2025 placed in Jesus’ manger in 2024

Let there be Peace on Earth and let it begin with me.

Inspiring Worship



67

Average in-person worship attendance. Increase from an average of 64 in 2023 and 55 in 2022.

44

Average online worship attendance (number of views) remained steady from 2023. Total YouTube subscribers increased by 21.

97

In-person attendance on Easter Sunday, March 31. Our highest attendance Sunday. There were 63 online views.

Focus

Details

Outcome

Youth Leaders in Worship

Children and youth are encouraged to share their wisdom and gifts in worship.

- Teens are excited about youth group and shared moving personal stories in Lent worship.
- Children embody the joy of generosity as they collect offering.
- Our kids grew in confidence as readers, candle lighters, and Time with Children wisdom-bearers.

Spiritual Nourishment

Apostle Peter guided our "Wandering Hearts" during Lent and "The Inn" at Christmas called us to open the doors of our hearts.

- Different reasons bring us to worship, yet we each leave knowing God's love.
- Empowered by community, we are better equipped to serve in love.

Growing Community

Another church joined our community worship offerings. 7 churches in total.

- Worshiped twice in the style of Taize with St. George's Episcopal.
- Thanksgiving Eve highlighted Disaster Response Ministries.
- Easter Vigil began around a fire.

A picture from youth-led worship on May 5, 2024.

Accepting and Loving One Another

Dec. 2024

To my dearest and most loved church family,

I truly don't know where to begin: to thank you all for your love, your support, and for your beautiful gift of generosity in helping me and my family during such a most difficult and terribly stressful time. We would have literally been homeless if not for our church family...

Thank You.



My living memorial which took place on Sunday, Nov. 16 was a beautiful and uplifting experience for me. I want to thank all who attend...

God bless you all,
Camille Grothier

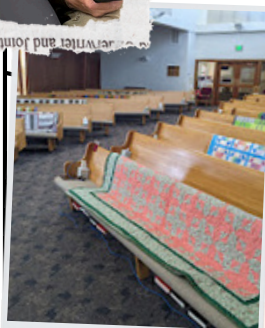
To all –
The Buffalo Supper was great – I enjoyed the food & the people there! But the biggest surprise was winning the Quilt. “WOW” – Everyone that has seen it at my house – Loves it! Thanks again!!
Love to all of you,
Myrna Dethloff



Dear People of UCC,

Thank you so much for the beautiful quilt gifted to our ministry! Those who receive the quilts are told the quilts are made by those who care about them!

Blessings,
Heart River Lutheran Church &
Heart River Bridges of Hope



The refugee family we are sponsoring arrived the evening of July 21 around 7pm. Tired but happy to be here! It was an amazing adventure after many delays getting out of O'Hare they finally got to Minnesota and a quick flight on into Bismarck. We had a wonderful group there to meet them and all day long I was hearing from people offering to help pay for hotels and other items as they traveled. The apartment looks really nice so thank you for all you've done along this journey! - Aug. 2024





Nurturing Spiritual Growth

Daily

- Our prayer list reminds us to hold one another in **prayer** every day.
- In 2024, we expanded our **Called to Care Team** so we can offer intentional support to more people in the year to come.

Weekly

- We ground ourselves in scripture and are present to one another in our **Sunday Worship**.
- **Sunday School** nurtures kids through grade 5 with hands on learning.
- Our youth practice incorporating faith into their daily lives and grow in confidence as leaders during **Wednesday Youth Group**.
- Adults dive into the scriptures on Thursday evenings and Friday mornings for **Bible Study**.
- As our **Choir** and the Psalms remind us, "Sing to the Lord!"

Monthly

- All are invited to gather around the **Communion** table to be fed in this sacred meal.
- Our ordained and lay leaders offer worship at **HayCreek Retirement Community** at least once a month.

Yearly

- The entire neighborhood is invited to grow in faith and friendship every year at our **Vacation Bible School** and **Block Party**.

Prayer for 2025: "I sing that the world would be at peace –
that our leaders would show love and caring for ALL."

Creating Space for Transformation



Providing sacred space for us to gather as a church family and with the wider community provides both joys and challenges. We celebrate the beautiful spaces, both indoors and outdoors, that provide a welcoming place for everyone. It takes many hands to accomplish this task, and Trustees appreciates the work of the many volunteers and staff who helped with this effort throughout 2024.



In the spring, our 20-year-old roof and gutters were replaced, and we are grateful the entire cost was covered with insurance proceeds. In the fall, major tree trimming was completed by a local contractor in partnership with a good neighbor. And our damaged and faded front corner sign will be replaced in 2025 thanks to support from Mayflower Circle.



Unfortunately, unexpected building expenses at the end of the year depleted our Building Fund. An aging basement fire sprinkler system and the sanctuary furnace and air conditioner had to be replaced at a cost of almost \$14,000.

Like many churches and other nonprofits, meeting our budget needs is an ongoing challenge. Our General Fund supports our annual operating expenses, and our Building Fund is used to cover major repairs and maintenance required to keep our indoor and outdoor spaces safe and welcoming. A generous donor provided a one-time \$10,000 gift in 2024 that helped us end the year with a small surplus. Trustees invites your prayerful consideration of how your donations in 2025 can support our annual mission work through the General Fund and the sacred space needs covered through our Building Fund.



Together, we will continue to provide a welcoming space for everyone as we live our mission.

Dana Schaar Jahner
Trustees chair

Thank you to donors and volunteers

From top: Sun-bleached & damaged church sign, Installing heat tape, Garden by the front door, Cleaning the gutters in fall.

Serving Our Neighbors



Fostering service and connection to our community in a sustainable way was a focus in 2024.

“Brush Strokes for All Folks” paint parties continue to draw both church members and participants from outside the Bismarck UCC community. We are blessed to have Nina Loeks of Art from the Heart guide us in creating beautiful paintings at these events. This year, we also added a bowling tournament in the early fall and hope to continue it in years to come. Beyond building community, these gatherings also helped to raise money for the church’s Building Fund.

In October, we held our traditional Buffalo Supper and Quilt Raffle. Our church again partnered with Ministry on the Margins and through the dinner and quilt raffle, we were able to donate \$1474 to Ministry on the Margins and raise \$1474 for Bismarck UCC. In addition to the monetary donation, the Buffalo Supper provided enough food for meals to be served over the course of Saturday and Sunday on-site at Ministry on the Margins. The Stewardship & Mission Committee wishes to thank the outstanding team of volunteers for helping make the event such a success. From tickets sales, to the artistry of making the quilt, to food storage and preparation, serving the dinner, and cleaning up, this event is a shining example of how this church community bands together to love and serve one another and the wider community.

In the weeks leading up to Consecration Sunday, we heard the stories of Bismarck UCC members on how this church has impacted the local, statewide, national, and global communities. We celebrated our commitment with a rural school in East Timor and their plans to build another school! It was a special treat to receive news from our friends in East Timor directly from Rev. Jim Moos, who traveled to East Timor over the summer. We continue to participate as a 5-for-5 Special Offering Church, providing financial support for the national UCC ministries of Our Church’s Wider Mission, One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, and the Christmas Fund.

As we look ahead to 2025, we hope you will prayerfully consider ways in which you can be involved in the stewardship and service that our beloved church family provides to one another and beyond.

Respectfully submitted by *Amber Augustadt*
Stewardship & Mission chair

Bismarck UCC Annual Meeting Agenda

2024 in Review

Welcome & Introductions
Call to Order & Establishing a Quorum
Opening Prayer
Minutes from the 2023 Annual Meeting
Highlights from 2024
Pastor's Report
New Business - 2025 Budget, Nominations
Installation of officers and committee members
Prayers for Ministry in 2025
Adjournment

Thank you to our 2025 Ministry Leaders



Pastor
Rev. Gretchen Deeg



Moderator
Carly Retterath



Administrative Assistant
Autum Eisenbraun



Choir Director
Craig DeVos



Accompanists: Boram Chern, Jeanne Kolberg, Connie Sjostrom, Darcy Avery
Financial Secretaries: Lesa Crowley, Gayle Klopp, Abby McConnell
Co-Treasurers: James Mandigo & Kirby Kruger
Custodians: Mary Rader & Jim Knutz
Accounting Services: Wanda Benson
Assistant Choir Director: Amber Augustadt



Prayer for 2025: "May everyone be present in the moment."

Hats Off to 2023

Annual Meeting Minutes

Held on 04 February 2024

Moderator Carly Retterath called to the meeting to order. Kirby Kruger, Clerk, confirmed we had a quorum. Carly led us in an opening prayer. A motion and a second to approve the minutes from the 2023 annual meeting were accepted and the minutes were approved, on a voice vote, as presented. Members of the church choir sang "Thank you" to the congregation for the wonderful year we had together.

2023 highlights included

- The Buffalo Supper resumed for the first time since the COVID-19 Pandemic. 130 meals were served, over \$4,000 was raised and over 100 meals went to Ministry on the Margins.
- Our church is partnering with CATCH in our local mission and also working with refugees coming into our community.
- Vacation Bible School, Sunday School and Confirmation programs have been successful
- The quilters group continues its work and mission
- Our church finished 2023 with our budget and spending in the positive side. Giving increased the last several months of 2023 across our congregation. We were truly blessed with the giving hearts.

Pastor Gretchen thanked the congregation for their incredible generosity throughout the year and especially in November and December which allowed us to end the year in the black. We have a new Annual Report format which will be used throughout the year to tell people about Bismarck UCC. Shared gratitude for the care the congregation showed to one another and the wider community.

Moderator opened the discussion on becoming an Opening and Affirming (ONA) church. After a explanation of the process and the ONA philosophy, ballots were distributed for the congregation to vote on the resolution. The Church Council had advised that they would like a 75% voter approval to pass this resolution. There were 46 votes in favor of the resolution and 2 votes opposing the resolution. The resolution to become an ONA congregation passed.

Dave Archer with the Trustees presented the 2024 budget.

- The 2024 budget with projected giving and expenses is a deficit budget.
- Two office spaces within the church are being rented out.
- Utilities have increased.
- There are building maintenance projects being planned, including a new roof, which will be covered by insurance.

A motion and a second was made to pass the budget. The budget was approved on a voice vote.

Nominations were accepted for new board and committee members.

Pastor Gretchen installed the new board members. There was a motion and a second to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned on a voice vote.

Respectfully submitted by Kirby Kruger, clerk.



Thank you to our 2025 Ministry Leaders

Council

*Carly Retterath, Moderator
Kirby Kruger, Clerk
Dana Schaar Jahner, Trustees
Lonna Augustadt, Deacons
Dawn Archer, Christian Ed
Dave Augustadt, Music
Stewardship Representative

Trustees

Ken Trana (25.1)
Jerry Reinisch (25.1)
Chris Lennon (26.2)
*Dana Schaar Jahner (26.1)
Mike Stein (27.2)
Jordan VanBerkum (27.1)
Michael Rush (28.1)
Jim Morgan (28.1)

Deacons

Hannah Vanorny (25.1)
Katie Patrie (25.1)
Carrie Mandigo (26.1)
David Archer (26.1)
*Lonna Augustadt (26.1)
Mary Beth Rush (27.2)
Baily VanBerkum (27.1)

Christian Education

Paulette Whitmore (25.1)
Katie Patrie (25.1)
*Dawn Archer (26.2)
Tamara Waters-Wheeler (26.1)
Amanda Wilson (27.1)
_____ (27.1)

Music

_____ (25.1)
Wanda Benson (26.2)
*Dave Augustadt (26.2)
_____ (27.1)
_____ (27.1)

Stewardship and Mission

Kyle Eisenbraun (25.1)
Bill & Maggie Demaree (25.0)
Lance Schriener (26.2)
_____ (26.1)
Darla Schafer (27.1)
Laurie Reinisch (27.2)
John Dynes (27.1)

Service & Fellowship

*Marcia Patrie
Darcy Avery
Cecilia Tolstedt
JoAnn & Kirby Kruger
Lonna Augustadt
Betty & Frank Picard
Paulette Whitmore
Lesa Crowley
Laurie Reinisch
Cary Retterath
Tamara Waters-Wheeler
Ken Trana & Dale Carmen
Mary Blumhagen
Dawn Archer
Kathy Rudolph
Baily VanBerkum
UCC Youth Group

Liturgical Arts

*Cecilia Tolstedt (26)
Betty Picard (25)
Paulette Whitmore (25)
Lonna Augustadt (25)
Betty Dacar (26)
Pat Grossman (26)
Carol Baber (27)

Personnel Parish Relations

Ken Trana
Wanda Benson
Kirby Kruger

HayCreek Lodge Ministry

*Darcy Avery
Dale Carmen
Ken Trana
Frank Picard
Hannah Vanorny
Jeanne Kolberg - pianist

Legend:

* chair/coordinator
(Final year of term. Term #)

“May all have enough
with equal voice and
value in this world.”

- Prayer for 2025 placed in Jesus'
manger in 2024