



April 2023



Pastor Brad Miller

GOOD NEWS

Intentional Interim Senior Pastor Brad Miller Charity Prophecy - Next Season

To say that Charity is a unique congregation, would be an overwhelming understatement. One of the things that makes us particularly unique is the fact that we have been guided for two decades by a prophetic word that has been a key component of Charity's identity. {See that prophecy on page 4} Early in my tenure here, I realized that reflecting upon and praying about that prophecy would be essential for having this Intentional Interim be a fruitful pivot point toward Charity's future. So, after much prayer and many conversations, on March 12th I shared my impressions about the validity and meaning of the prophecy moving forward. If you missed it, you can watch it online (see how on page 4).

Please note, though much of my ministry involves helping congregations plan for the future, I claim no particular prophetic spiritual gifting. What follows is the result of prayerful contemplation and rational observations; only the leaders and disciples of Charity can prayerfully discern if my impressions accurately summarize God's will for Charity.

The Bonsai Decade Must End –
Over the past decade, Charity has repeatedly been the victim of sheep-stealers who want "their own" church without being troubled to proclaim the Good News to fresh ears. That needs to stop. Our primary purpose is not to provide sacrificial cuttings so that other churches have an easy "instant church."

Charity Should Function at Scale –
We have a building and a staff model that are optimized around a general size. Each time that the sheep-stealers have come collecting fleeces, we have rebounded. Still, the years of rebuilding are always a time of stress. We need to grow back to the size that we function ideally at: something like 300 to 500 AWWA (Average Weekly Worship Attendance).

Charity Should Plan and Plant a Not-Neighboring Church – The instinct to plant churches is good, it just needs to be done in a strategic and God-honoring way.

(continued on page 4)

EVENTS

April 2-April 9
Holy Week
See page 8

April 10
Easter Monday
Office Closed

Tuesday, April 11
Amazing Grays
6:00 p.m.

Thursday, April 20
Pinochle Night
6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 26
Last Day of WOW
5:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 29
Quilting Group
9:00 a.m.

Executive Director of Ministries Doug Leet Where Charity and Love Are...

It was the spring of 1989. I just turned 29 and Rhonda was 27 when we had our first child, Eric. Having recently moved back to Bismarck, we found ourselves hosting Pastor Bob Nordvall in our small apartment for a pastoral visit. I don't remember what initially brought us to Charity (the Holy Spirit was definitely involved), but the welcoming atmosphere we found here made us feel a part of a faith family.

"'Where Charity and love are, there is God.' St. John," was the inscription on the 10th Anniversary coffee mug we received when we joined. Pastor Bob had been at Charity only four years, and had just come through a lot of turmoil himself with pastor issues. We were a small congregation back then, and now we find ourselves in that place again.

What attracted us to Charity then is different, I believe, from what we see as "attractational" churches are currently offering. It's where we grew in faith by concentrating on the basics of our congregational calling. This current congregation has inherited a solid foundation on which to build. With reliance on God, we need to go no further than the preamble to Charity's constitution for guidance:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit Amen. Created in God's Image, redeemed by His Son, empowered by His Holy Spirit, the congregation is called to:

- Proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20)

- Administer the Sacraments (Mark 14:22-25)
- Study the Scriptures (Ephesians 4:11-16)
- Instruct the youth and provide for their spiritual welfare (Matthew 19:13-14)
- Witness to the community, nation, and world (II Timothy 2:15, Acts 1:18)
- Support one another in prayer (James 5:16)
- Help those in need (I John 3:17)
- And practice responsible stewardship (I Peter 4:10-11)



Doug Leet

The work that lies ahead of us in rebuilding ministries will be challenging. But it's times like these that present opportunities, and our biggest opportunity is to let Jesus into our lives. It's when we open ourselves up to His leading, individually and as a congregation, that we'll be most fruitful. We need to be a praying community. At the risk of overdoing it, I will again quote noted Norwegian theologian, O. Hallesby. Yes, O. is for Ole, and he wrote a whole book on prayer:

"Notice carefully every word here. It is not our prayer which draws Jesus into our hearts. Nor is it our prayer which moves Jesus to come in to us. All He needs is access. He enters in of His own accord, because He desires to come in. To pray is nothing more involved than to let Jesus into our needs, and permitting Him to exercise His own power in dealing with them. And that requires no strength. It is only a question of our wills. Will we give Jesus access to our needs?"

Charity is, in fact, a smaller congregation right now. Our average weekly service attendance is under 200. That

Financial Report

Feb. Actual Income	\$ 41,940
Feb. Budgeted Income	<u>\$73,849</u>
Difference	\$31,909

Feb. Actual Income	\$ 41,940
Feb. Actual Expenses	<u>\$55,194</u>
Difference	\$13,254

YTD Actual Income	\$86,536
YTD Budgeted Income	<u>\$147,698</u>
Difference	\$61,162

YTD Actual Income	\$86,536
YTD Actual Expense	<u>\$115,830</u>
Difference	\$29,294

Memorials

MEMORIAL TRUST FUND

- In memory of Norm Graf by Chad & Laura Kourajian
- In memory of Jon Mielke by Mark & Lisa Aamodt and Kathy Wermager
- In memory of Jenny Schmidt by Alvina Fueller

directly impacts our budget. As you can see in the accompanying financial chart on this page, through February, Charity has had almost \$30,000 less revenue than expenses. If that trend continues throughout the year, we will end up with a deficit of nearly \$200,000. Let us continue to let Jesus into our needs, individually and corporately. I love this sentence from Mike Fluharty's closing paragraph in his newsletter article this month, "So let us accept our challenges and trials joyfully with hope and love in our hearts for Him and each other." Amen!

Vision Council Update

Greetings from the Vision Council.

"Prayers For God's solutions to the difficulties and challenges facing Charity at this time and trusting that His Will be done". April's prayer for the weekly bulletin is a timely one. We would encourage all of you to add it to your daily prayers.

One of our challenges right now is the continuing search for a Worship Leader. The Vision Council is very thankful and grateful for everyone that has stepped up to serve through this transition, but we continue to search for a longer-term solution. Please pray with us that God moves the heart of the person he has gifted with this talent to step forward to lead our worship team.

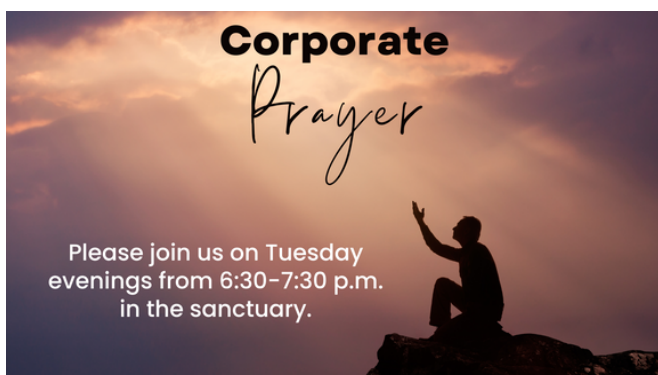
We are also very close to finalizing a new job description for the Youth Director position. All of the last year's challenges have certainly reduced the numbers in our youth programs but has not in any way reduced the Vision Council's belief in the importance of the youth ministry. Keep this position in your prayers.

Now we need to talk about the budget. Doug does a good job putting the numbers out there so you can see our monthly income is falling short of our expenses. While that can never be described as a good thing, should we be concerned, very concerned, anxious, or overwhelmed with despair? At this point in time the Vision Council, Staff, and Treasurer are concerned but continue to be faithful to God's plan for us. Charity has been blessed by God with resources and past leadership that set some of those resources aside anticipating lean years or challenging transitions. By no means are these resources inexhaustible but if properly administered will see us through this transition and period of regrowth. Continued prayers for responsible stewardship, adherence to good governance, prayerful discernment for God's will in all things, and your faithful giving will see us through these circumstances also.

With all of these challenges before us we also need to give thanks to our Lord for the gift of our salvation. As we celebrate Easter we need to reflect on the price He has already paid for our sins to be forgiven and welcomed into his Kingdom. So let us accept our challenges and trials joyfully with hope and love in our hearts for Him and each other. May you all have a Blessed Easter and may the Holy Spirit move your heart to feel the peace and joy that comes from following our Lord and Savior.

God Bless
Mike Fluharty
Vision Council President

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



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.*"

1st Week - Healing Service
2nd Week - Bulletin Congregational Prayer
3rd Week - Vision Council Meeting Agenda
4th Week - Senior Pastor Call Process
5th Week - World Peace

From the Pastor

(continued from page 1)

We can learn and serve the kingdom by patiently planning and implementing the launch of a church that is at least 50 miles (and maybe 500 or 1000 miles) away from 120 Aspen Avenue.

Charity Should Continue Global & Local Impact – Charity's rich history of supporting nearby and far away ministry projects predates the 2000 prophetic word, but it has continued robustly during that era. We ought to use the prophetic word as a guide in choosing among the innumerable benevolence options presented to us. Ministries that offer shelter or haven (though not too literally) should get a higher percentage of our benevolence resources.

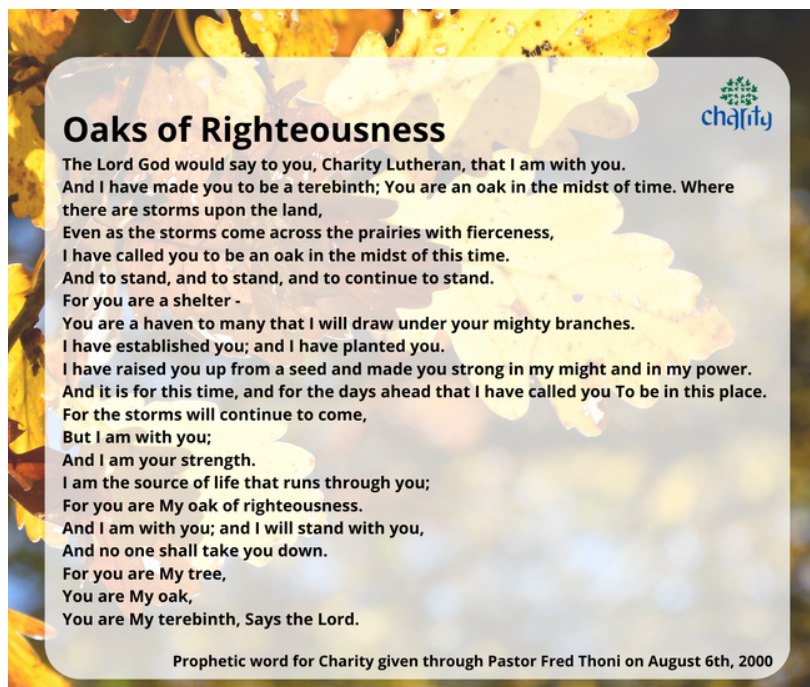
Disciplemaking Must be Reclaimed – Our current Constitution has its origin near the time of the prophetic word. It boldly opts for "Disciple" language in place of "Member" language. In order for Charity to stand, and to stand, and to continue to stand we need active and growing and multiplying disciples. Disciples served faithfully through recent trials, but we realized that our processes for developing all into disciples had collapsed – one example being the omission of catechesis. Making disciples has to become a central activity again.

Use of the Scaffolding Must be Normalized – Scaffolding has come to have a secondary meaning of general supporting structure in organizations. Metaphorically, it works just like the mechanical platforms used in construction and maintenance. Over the past decade, too many voices suggested that we didn't need our scaffolding. Charity's organizational scaffolding include: Holy Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, our LCMC relationship, and our governing documents. They are all for regular use – they should not be reserved for emergencies and special occasions!

Please pray about the above six points and share your prayerful discernments with the Vision Council.

Finally, I will be sticking around a bit longer – The Vision Council and I have prayerfully concluded that it would be ideal to know that we are fully pastorally staffed as we head into the summer and prepare for a busy autumn. Therefore, we have agreed to an extension of my Intentional Interim Senior Pastor contract to cover June, July, and August. I remain absolutely ineligible for the regular Call vacancy which the Call Committee continue to make good process toward filling.

Peace be with you,
Pastor Miller



Oaks of Righteousness

The Lord God would say to you, Charity Lutheran, that I am with you.
And I have made you to be a terebinth; You are an oak in the midst of time. Where there are storms upon the land,
Even as the storms come across the prairies with fierceness,
I have called you to be an oak in the midst of this time.
And to stand, and to stand, and to continue to stand.
For you are a shelter -
You are a haven to many that I will draw under your mighty branches.
I have established you; and I have planted you.
I have raised you up from a seed and made you strong in my might and in my power.
And it is for this time, and for the days ahead that I have called you To be in this place.
For the storms will continue to come,
But I am with you;
And I am your strength.
I am the source of life that runs through you;
For you are My oak of righteousness.
And I am with you; and I will stand with you,
And no one shall take you down.
For you are My tree,
You are My oak,
You are My terebinth, Says the Lord.

Prophetic word for Charity given through Pastor Fred Thoni on August 6th, 2000

Pastor Brad March 12 sharing

If you would like to hear what Pastor Brad said on March 12 about the validity and meaning of the prophecy moving forward, please go to our Facebook page and watch the sermon from March 12 (Third Sunday in Lent) or scan the QR code below to get taken directly to the livestream link.



stephen at Charity Lutheran MINISTRY.

Stephen Ministry Leadership would like to thank Charity Lutheran Congregation for all your continued support and prayers for our ministry here at Charity. Our new Stephen Ministers (SM) have not only continued their initial training, been commissioned, been attending their continuing education training, have joined all the other Stephen Ministers in our Bi-weekly Supervision meetings, but one of our new male SM has been assigned a Care Receiver.

Our Ministry is lay congregation members of Charity who are trained to provide confidential one-to-one care to those (care receivers) experiencing a difficult time in their life (grief, divorce, job loss, illness, relocation, etc....). SMs come from all walks of life, but they all share a passion for bringing Christ's love and care to people during a time of need. After a Care Receiver (CR) is matched with a Stephen Minister, that SM meets with that person on a weekly basis to listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support. The caring relationship lasts as long as the need for care exists, or when the CR feels comfortable enough with their situation, they decide to end the relationship. The relationship has no time limit.



Currently Charity has fourteen trained SMs and of those, 6 are matched with a CR. If you, or someone you know is interested in or in need of a SM, please call the church office 258-1228.

Charity Call Committee Report

Call Committee Chair Beth Allen presented a report to the congregation on March 5 regarding the response to the Senior Pastor job position that was posted on the LCMC website and elsewhere the end of January. We have responded to several inquiries, answering questions individuals have had about the position and asking for additional information from them.

We conducted an interview via Zoom with one candidate and are moving forward with further consideration of this candidate and others. We met with the Vision Council on March 21 for further discussion and direction and hope to have more contact with other candidates after Easter.

We praise God for leading us to where we are today and ask for your continued prayers for our congregation and for the Senior Pastor God is preparing to send to us. Please reach out to us either individually or through our email at callcommittee@charitylutheran.org with any questions, comments or concerns.

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

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

Confirmation Retreat from March

Charity had 29 youth and adults attend the Confirmation Retreat on March 19. It was a long, but fruitful day and those in attendance learned a lot. Confirmation Sunday will be held on May 21.



Thank you

Dallas Sailer faithfully served Charity Lutheran as Treasurer for 18 years. We celebrated his years of service on March 19 with cake following our worship service.



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. Become a "SPUD CLUB FAMILY" for 2023 and donate now!!!! Your name will remain on this list for the entire year.

March Gifts

Donavon Hatzenbuhler - in memory of Duane Kuehn

****Acknowledgement of gifts to Trust fund in current newsletter. Listed as a member in following months newsletter.*

2023 Spud Club Members

- Donavon Hatzenbuhler
- Mark & Liz Landis
- Dave & Barb Lee
- Doug & Rhonda Leet
- Wayne & Marie Levang
- Craig & Sandra Lohstreter
- Brad & Pam Miller
- Don & Kathy Nordquist
- Jerry & Renee Walz

PRAYER CHAIN MINISTRY

prayer.chain@charitylutheran.org

If you would like to be added to this ministry or no longer wish to be on this vital and needed prayer chain, please get in contact with Sandy by prayer chain email or by phone at 701-426-9802.

A reminder of HIPPA regulations, any email prayer chain request must have the permission of the individual or family to post an email prayer chain request.

"Greetings Charity"

Steven & Robin Ose - Cru

Greetings Charity!

We are Steven and Robin Ose together with our boys Stevie (19) and J.J. (18). You may remember my father Roger who passed in 2018 after decades of partnering with Charity on farm projects in the developing world. My mother Janet is in a care center by us and is living with dementia at this stage. Our boys are in college and excited to grow in faith and academics. Stevie is at Bethany Lutheran College studying business, while J.J. is at the U of MN studying mechanical engineering.

Cru is a missions agency started by Bill and Vonette Bright in 1951 with a goal of reaching the world for Christ. It has grown to 72 plus ministries in the U.S. and expanded to almost every country on earth. The goal is still the same, reach the world for Christ. Our vision is pretty simple, "So that everyone would know someone who truly follows Jesus." Pray with us to that end!

We serve with Cru in two key areas: 1) helping mobilize missionaries for the harvest nationally and internationally; as well as, 2) teaching in the Cru seminary. We are in the middle of spring break season which means "missions" for Cru. Over 2,000 Cru college students are reaching out with the gospel primarily overseas while their peers are sitting on the beach in Florida. Many thousands will hear the gospel as a result. College students in Toulouse, France to farmers in rural Columbia are hearing the gospel because Cru students tsaid, "Here am I, send me."

We also mobilize long-term missionaries. The most recent are a couple from College of Ozarks who will be serving with the campus team in Slovakia. They will be raising up disciples on the college campuses there with the goal of helping send graduates into Eastern Europe as missionaries.

Our second key objective is to equip new Cru missionaries for the harvest. Four times a year I (Steven) teach in person or online, New Testament and Introduction to Missions. New staff with Cru take these two seminary courses helping prepare them to carry God's word to the nations. It is academically rigorous but also focused on their discipleship. It is a joy to be able to build into their spiritual formation!

The year 2001 seems like yesterday when I was sitting with Karen Nordvall in the missions committee at Charity, sharing about our mission work in East Asia. Charity has been a faithful partner with us since then! Thank you! You are helping fulfill the Great Commission!

Jesus saves,
Steven and Robin Ose





APRIL BIRTHDAYS

April 1
Desirae Seedorf

April 2
Jaxton Bullock

April 3
Ken Geiger
Nathaniel Oakland
Dennis Simenson

April 6
Pam Miller

April 8
Ray Schock

April 9
Sonja Bosch
Melissa Schmidt

April 10
Ryan Geiger
Dallas Sailer

April 12
Andrew Hershey

April 14
Floyd Bentz
Brad Miller

April 16
Mason Kindel
Allison Sullivan

April 17
Bria Erickson

April 19
Paulette Robison

April 20
Danette Miller

April 22
Brent Allen

April 23
Emelia Kost

April 24
Dylan Chamley
Sandy Erickstad

April 25
Monica Eckroth

April 26
William Anderson
Gary Oakland

April 27
Rod Melby
Kathy Wermager

April 29
Melodie Schulz



Those who
remain
in love
remain
in God
and
God
remains
in them.

1 JOHN 4:16



April 2 - Bob and Patti Nordvall
April 18 - Ron and Linda Mathern
April 24 - Don and Kathy Nordquist



April Events

Amazing Grays

The Amazing Grays will meet Tuesday, April 11 at 6:00 p.m. for a catered dinner. Anne Vadnie, a ND Historian, will be speaking on the Orphan Train that went through ND and other interesting stories.



Please let Renee Walz know if you plan to attend by Sunday evening, April 9, so she can order food Monday morning, April 10. Please RSVP to Renee at 400-1201 by text or phone call.

Pinochle Group

The Pinochle Group will meet Thursday, April 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, April 29 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.



Adult Series

Sunday at 10:45 a.m.
in the Sanctuary

He is Risen

The church office will be closed Easter Monday

Gospel Sing-Along

Sunday, April 16

2:00-3:30pm

Charity Lutheran Church

This is for you and your Gospel music loving friends and family who enjoy listening to or singing along to Gospel music. Words are projected up on screen. Led by Fueller sisters, Lorri Mittleider and Christie Neumiller. Open to public. Coffee fellowship following. (Anyone can bring a treat to share.) The offering taken is for Heaven's Helpers Soup Café.

GOSPEL MUSIC SING-ALONG

Sunday, April 16
2:00 - 3:30 PM

Contact Lorri Mittleider at (701) 400-1849 for more information.

Graduate Photos Due

Class of
2023!

Graduation Sunday is
May 21, 2023

We need your baby & senior photos!

Please email your photos to:
jennifer.braun@charitylutheran.org
by Sunday, April 15.



Youth News

Wednesday, April 26
Last Day of WOW Programming

5:00-6:00pm WOW Meal
6:15-7:15pm Preschool-Middle School
7:30-9:00pm High School



We are looking forward to Vacation Bible School beginning, Monday June 19th. Stay tuned for more information.

Last Day of Sunday School is May 14

Our last day of Sunday school for the school year will be May 14.

Volunteer Opportunities

We are looking to add volunteers to our tech team. If you like computers and technology, we have a place for you. We are looking to add people to run our ProPresenter (screens) during worship services and are also looking to train a couple people on our soundboard and video equipment. Please contact John Seedorf at 701-426-9768 or by email at john.seedorf@charitylutheran.org if you would be interested in helping with this important ministry area in our church. Training will be provided.

Holy Week

There will be no WOW programming on Wednesday, April 5. We look forward to having you participate in our Holy Week services. During our Maundy Thursday service we will celebrate First Communion with our 5th grade students. See the back cover for our full Holy Week schedule.



An Easter Prayer

*Risen Jesus, compel us to
share the good news of your
life wherever we go.*

*May our hearts overflow with
joy at your Resurrection.*

May our faces shine with the light of Easter.

*May our joy be an infectious invitation for others
to come and see the tomb lying empty. Amen.*



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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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

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE



PALM SUNDAY
APRIL 2
9:30 a.m.



MAUNDY THURSDAY
APRIL 6
7:00 p.m.



GOOD FRIDAY
APRIL 7
7:00 p.m.



EASTER SUNDAY
APRIL 9
9:00 a.m.
11:00a.m.