



THE VISITOR

BGUMC Virtual Advent Vespers

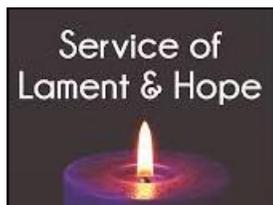


We invite you to join our 5-minute virtual Advent Vespers each Sunday evening on our BGUMC Facebook page. Each night, we will gather at the stable to light candles, share scripture, hear familiar Christmas songs, and sing carols. These Facebook postings will remain accessible throughout the Christmas season if you would like to use them to sing your favorite carols more than once! (Please note that our first Sunday was a great experiment and that the clarity of the images is much improved in the following Sundays.)

- November 29th: The Bethlehem Candle
- December 6th: The Shepherds & Sheep Candle
- December 13th: The Angel Candle
- December 20th: The “Critters” Candle
- December 24th (Christmas Eve): The Christ Candle

As we stand at the stable’s doorway:
We pause in transition and wonder.
We watch, as the “something old” is left behind
and the “something new” unfolds before us.

Advent Blessings to you from your friends at
Blooming Grove UMC.



12/17/20: Virtual Service of Lament

On December 17, 2020 at 7:00 p.m., our Prairie Lakes Parish will have a virtual

Service of Lament. It will be a time to join a ZOOM meeting (service) with music, readings, and the opportunity to participate by adding your laments in the chat box. Laments can be anything that is weighing heavy on your heart, prayer concerns, or things that sadden you. We’ll offer these things up to God knowing that our God is a mighty God who can care for our laments. The service will be approximately ½ hour.

Those on our email prayer lists will receive a meeting invite. If you would like to be added to the email prayer lists, please contact Pastor Kathy.

12/24/20 Christmas Eve Service



On November 19th, our Minnesota UMC Bishop, Bruce Ough, shared the message found below with our MN Unit-

ed Methodist congregations. Pastor Kathy King is now in the process of designing a special, and individualized “ZOOM” Christmas Eve service for each of our three churches of the Prairie Lakes Parish. Although we won’t be physically in one another’s presence, we will be able to see and hear one another and interact with one another. For BGUMC, we are excited to share the news that Brad Spinler will be reading the Christmas Story from Luke! Watch for more to come as we move closer to Christmas Eve.



11/19/2020 Message from Bishop Bruce Ough

“Group and family gatherings have been the most significant source of the spread of COVID-19 in recent weeks. We have the power to help change the trajectory of the pandemic in

Minnesota. Doing no harm, acting for the common good, and protecting the most vulnerable among us is how we love our neighbors. We can give rise to the light in the midst of the darkness of this disease.

So, I am making a difficult ask. Advent and Christmas is a season when we most want to gather, but this year, we need to be a light to others by continuing to worship at home and online, and limiting our personal activities to what is absolutely essential.

We can do this hard thing. We can do it because we do not rely on our own strength and capacities. We rely on the promise made real in the incarnation: God is with us. The birth of the Christ child we celebrate this season proclaims that. So now we live it.”

December 2020

Peace, Hope, Joy, Love



2020—As the year began, we heard news reports about a virus that was spreading throughout China and making its way across the continent. But it seemed that it was far away and we Americans had nothing to worry about. But as February ebbed and March knocked at our doors, we began to hear the ominous reports that the virus was in the United States and then we heard of cases in our state and we couldn't ignore it any longer—COVID-19 was real and it was here. All of a sudden, we became the church outside of our church buildings.

It seems we've been living these changed lives for so long now. We know how it is to celebrate Easter in a different way. We experienced outdoor worship thanks to a team who was willing to do the work it took to get the equipment and then—figure out how it worked. We experienced Confirmation at our confirmand's homes and then—on a Zoom meeting. We just celebrated Thanksgiving—still away from our church gathering places. Christmas is nearly here and many of us feel the pain of knowing we will not sing Silent Night in our church buildings.

Yet, we know the positive things that came from being the church outside of the church. We worship virtually knowing that others are worshipping in the same way. Thinking of our church family helps us to stay connected. Many of you call one another just to check in. It is another way of being Christ's disciples. The work of the church continues --whether it is over the Internet using technology or through the US Mail—we stay connected.

Joy and love can be ours this Christmas when we focus on the Christ-child. Let us place our hope in the peace, joy, and love that we find in the Savior we celebrate at Christmas! We can honor our Savior by being committed to caring for others in the ways that keep one another safe. Pray for the wisdom of the experts who are working so hard on vaccines!

I want to thank all of you who brought Jerry and I food after my surgery. Your caring for us meant so much! Thank you too to all who reached out to us after Jerry's brother, Jim's, death. You all touched our hearts with your care and love.

It has been a year we will long remember. Jerry and I pray that God richly blesses each one of you in 2021.

Be well dear ones, wear your masks, and keep washing those hands.

Merry Christmas!

Pastor Kathy

Emma Norton Gift Cards

We find ourselves in the season of Advent, preparing our hearts for the coming of the birth of Jesus. It is also a time we look for ways of being Christ in the world. In years past we have Adopted a Family and purchased gifts that were fun and needed. This year with all the unknowns, the *Blooming Grove Ad Board* is suggesting a new and different opportunity to serve. **Emma Norton Services** is asking for **\$25.00 Target gift cards** to give the women and children that they serve. If you would like to donate a gift card, you can mail the purchased gift card directly to Emma Norton Services, 670 North Robert Street, St. Paul, MN 55101. They would need to receive them no later than December 14th.

Thank you for all the ways you are the face of Christ to the world.

BGUMC 2020 Advent/Christmas Missions Offering

We invite you to “Be the Light - Live Hope” through your financial gifts for the MN UMC Conference Love Offering, the focus of which is to help some of the most vulnerable among us in Minnesota in these turbulent times. All funds will be distributed among four service organizations, as listed below. We invite you to send your gifts “in honor of” or “in memory of” persons who are important in your life. We will include your names, and the names of your loved ones in our January newsletter. **By December 23rd**, please mail your gifts to our BGUMC address, PO Box 171, Medford, MN 55049-0171. Please note “Love Offering” in the memo line of your check, and enclose a note listing the names of people you wish to remember by indicating “in honor of” and/or “in memory of”. Thank you.

Emma Norton Services (ENS) St. Paul/Maplewood

ENS is a nonprofit organization actively combating poverty and positively impacting more than 250 people annually. ENS partners with women, children, and families who are homeless and experiencing the challenges of mental and/or chemical disabilities. Without having to worry about the basic need of a safe, secure place to live, women and children can utilize and focus on supportive programs, life skills, services and opportunities available to accomplish their goals. ENS fosters stability and encourages personal growth at two locations: Emma Norton Residence in downtown St. Paul is home to 50



individual women - Emma's Place in Maplewood is home to 13 single parent families with three or more children. Housing is permanent - the women and families may reside with ENS as long as they desire.

Simpson Housing Services Minneapolis

Simpson Housing Services began as an emergency overnight shelter in the basement of Simpson United Methodist Church in 1982. Simpson has since become a leading nonprofit providing assistance to people experiencing homelessness. In response to unmet community needs, their programs have grown to include emergency shelter, single adult supportive housing, and family supportive housing. They work across the metro area, partnering with landlords and developers to find affordable housing for all families and individuals. At any given time, they provide supportive services to 100 individuals and 210 families with over 500 children.

Joyce Uptown Foodshelf Minneapolis

The mission of the Joyce Uptown Food Shelf is to distribute food to those in need, with respect and dignity, as an expression of the love of God. In a message from their website: “We join our community in mourning Mr. Floyd's tragic death. We stand with everyone seeking to root out the injustices within our current systems and support full equity for all people. The collateral damage to small businesses has only further intensified the need to support our neighbors experiencing food insecurity. We are working with Hunger Solutions and other organizations in our community to coordinate efforts to support and distribute food to our community.”

MN Conference Committee on Native American Ministry's Diaper Drop

The casino and restaurant industry, a primary source of revenue in our MN Native American communities, has been severely impacted by COVID-19. Many of our native brothers and sisters have been without income for a number of months, and/or are now working with limited income. In an effort to share our care and our resources, the MN Conference Committee on Native American Ministry, of which Cindy Saufferer is a member, is leading an effort called “Diaper Drops”. Funds raised will be used to purchase semi-loads of factory-direct diapers, which will be delivered to Health & Human Services groups in our MN native communities, to be given to persons in need of these important supplies for their children.



Happy December Birthday



1 Dawn Karsten	19 Jacob Gasner
4 Walter Karsten	21 Marlis Mahler
6 Carol Karsten	24 Elizabeth Bartosch
7 Becky Lustig	25 Levi Blake
8 Scot Schmitz	26 Jenine Koziolk
10 Joshua Kanne	26 Leah Krell
12 Fred Fyvie	28 Riley Poe
13 Weston Janke	28 Faye Kanne
17 Doug Wilkowske	29 Sophie Morgan
17 Cindy Kennedy	31 Kaitlyn Kanne

The Biggest Gift of Christmas

T'was the night before Christmas,
 God glanced over the earth.
 He looked to and fro,
 All over it's girth.
 "They missed it again!"
 He said with a sigh,
 A heavy heart and a tear in his eye.
 "I gave them my son,
 So they could be free.
 My greatest gift to them from me.
 They traded me in
 For a man in red, a little tree,
 And horse drawn sled.
 How do I save them
 and make them see.
 My love is complete,
 My grace is free.
 How do I help them
 When all they know
 Is a talking snowman,
 And a box with a bow.
 Maybe next year
 They will stop and see
 The biggest gift of Christmas
 Is the little child from me."



Treasurer's Report

November 5 thru
 December 1, 2020



General Budget Income \$ 6,010.00

Expenses	
Salary Expense	\$ 1,417.15
Disability Insurance	17.97
Health Insurance	438.90
Non health flex pastor	15.83
Cell Phone	22.47
Pastor's Housing	380.00
Pension	212.69
Lawn Mowing	110.00
CPE Registration	9.50
Excel Energy	74.82
Total Expenses	\$ 3,514.21

(Net Income: + \$ 2,495.79)

Other Income Received

Restoration	1,000.00
Run For The Loaves	225.00
Love Offering	100.00

Thank you for your continuing financial support of BGUMC in these difficult days of the coronavirus and social distancing. During this time when we are unable to physically gather, please send your gifts/checks to Blooming Grove United Methodist, P.O. Box 171, Medford, MN 55049-0171. Again, thank you.

From the Mailbox:

Dear Pastor Kathy—and all of your flock!

Thank you for sending the "Visitor" to me! I cherish the faith which I attempted to serve from 1968-1973! Many good memories!

One thing you may find interesting was the canoe we bought at Herter's in Waseca! It is lying under the deck at the family cabin at Cross Lake, Minnesota! Scratched up and faded—but still workable!! (Like some of us!)

The hard work and complexity of your renovation of the church building is a sample of the faith you share right now! The virus has changed all of our lives! Due to the virus I haven't been to church in the old fashioned way for many months. But my family and I have gratitude for the part you play in our lives after all these years!

May God bless and guide you—now and always!

Love, Norman Witt

(Pastor - BGUMC/Morristown Peace
 UMC: 1968-1973)



Interfaith Leaders Offer Pandemic Prayer



The leaders of more than a dozen judicatories in Minnesota, including Dakotas-Minnesota Area Bishop Bruce Ough, crafted a joint statement voicing concern about the increase in COVID-19 cases and urging Minnesotans to serve their communities, partner with neighbors and health care workers, and make changes that will save lives. The statement is as follows:

Since March we, the heads of communion and executives whose congregations and clergy represent over 1,000,000 Minnesotans of faith, have been in regular contact with each other. We face a deadly threat that thrives when we behave like everything is normal. We have shared the pressing concerns of communities who have been most impacted by this virus. In recent weeks we have felt greater urgency about our deepening crisis.

We have learned to guide our congregations in adopting new practices which minimize the risk of COVID-19 infection. We can do this while still performing the essential roles of faith communities in connecting people with God and with each other. We urge you to also adjust your behaviors to match the reality of a worsening pandemic.

We take as given certain facts about the virus:

- The threat of COVID-19 is real, and that in Minnesota as in the rest of the nation it is worsening.
- Among our own state's faith communities there has been an increase in cases connected to worship, weddings, and funerals.
- While following safer practices guidance in serving our communities does mitigate risk, it does not eliminate risk of transmission.
- Communities of color are disproportionately impacted by the health effects of COVID-19.
- Behavioral changes including increased hand washing, physical distancing, and mask-wearing help to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

In addition to these truths, we also know that the moral voice of faith communities makes a real difference in shaping how we face this disease. Though we may all have our feet in different places on policy solutions, our hearts are in the same place in our desire to save lives. We urge Minnesotans to embrace three values when choosing how to oppose this disease.

Service: Try to be of service not only to your faith but to your community. The decisions made in each household have impacts that reach far beyond its walls. Make decisions not simply for your own sake but for the sakes of those whom you have yet to meet. Consider how you can be of service to your neighbors during this pandemic.

Partnership: Partner with your neighbors and public health workers. There is expertise in the world that can help us all to better survive through the pandemic. Our congregations who share facts about COVID-19, who host testing sites, and who are changing the ways they conduct ministry are active partners with experts in their communities forming a united front in the fight against this disease's spread.

Leadership: Leaders of all stripes know that pushback is an ever-present element of change. As a leader, please make difficult changes in order to change lives. While we would all prefer to wish COVID-19 out of our lives, those leaders strong enough to look our rising numbers in the eye and help their congregations, communities, and families to behave differently in order to save lives deserve our thanks. We also know that your decisions have ripple effects. We pray our own changed behaviors give others the courage to also make life-saving choices.

Every community is different and there is no end to the variety of congregations and ministries engaged in our state. We find ourselves polarized in many ways and of one mind in so few. Yet we are united in our being under threat from COVID-19. And we are united as diverse faith leaders across the state in urging all Minnesotans to unite under the values of service, partnership and leadership. In doing so, we make real our shared commitment as people of faith to love our neighbor.

Consider sharing this prayer at your holiday table: "We grieve those who are not at our table today, even as we hope that the end of this struggle is in sight. Give us servant hearts to love our neighbors enough to not spread this disease to them. Help us to partner with medical professionals and front-line workers as we wash our hands, physically distance, and wear our masks. With these practices, may our actions lead to a better and more hopeful future."



Please pray for the following persons and situations shared publicly within our community of BGUMC in the past month.

Note from Pastor Kathy King:

Please call or text me if you would like me to visit or if there is a prayer concern that you prefer to keep private. We are a community strengthened by the power of prayer. We are stronger when we intercede on the behalf of our brothers and sisters in the faith. Please know that does not mean your name needs to be on a public prayer list. It means that your Pastor can pray for you and help you in any way you define.

- Melvin, friend of members of BGUMC, and father of church neighbors, as he makes significant strides in his recovery process following an aortic aneurism in May.
- Marlis Mahler's brother, Harley, as he begins his next intense round of chemotherapy treatments for an aggressive form of cancer. Harley's November return trip to Rochester Mayo showed that the chemotherapy is making an impact!
- Alex and Lacey, and baby Bowen, as they give thanks for Bowen's continuing growth and weight gain and his happy personality! Continue to hold them in prayer as they work with doctors in the months ahead to find answers for Bowen's medical concerns.
- Ron and Carolyn as they continue to work through several health concerns in their family.
- Pastor Kathy's 21-year-old grandson, Andrew, who is recovering from surgery for a ruptured appendix.
- Tracie Spinler's classmate Jerine, and her husband Dan, whose only child, their 21 year old daughter, died unexpectedly.
- Tracie Spinler's coworker, Colleen, whose 5-year old granddaughter was diagnosed with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. Colleen was also tested for COVID - and we pray for Colleen's health.
- Marlis Mahler's co-worker Eric's friend Ricky, who was flown to Minneapolis and has been on life support with COVID. Ricky has recently received a feeding tube, but his lungs are getting a little stronger, and that is a good sign. Also pray for Brad, another friend of Eric's, who has returned home from being hospitalized for COVID, but is not yet able to return to work.
- Nick, Michael Kanne's fraternity "little brother", who had to have emergency surgery on Thanksgiving. He's back home and recovering, and we give thanks for that.

- Carolyn Kanne's aunt, Leona, who tripped, fell, and broke two ribs. She is over 90 with lung and heart conditions. Prayers for a safe time in the hospital and recovery.
- Prayers of thanks for Elana, the youngest daughter of Chuck and Linda Danks, who has recovered from COVID and been given a clean bill of health - and her unborn child has been given a clean bill of health as well!
- Elizabeth, daughter of Chuck and Linda Danks, who has now contracted COVID. She works at a group home in Mankato with vulnerable adults. Thankfully, none of the group home people were exposed to her.
- Don, who has been diagnosed with COVID, and Char - who so far, is ok.
- Marlis Mahler's co-worker and friend, Alicyn, her husband Jared, and their daughter Lily. Alicyn and Jared have contracted COVID and are home resting. They are watching Lily carefully for any sign of illness.
- All members of BGUMC who are in quarantine due to family members or co-workers who have been diagnosed with COVID.
- All in our circle of family, friends, neighbors, communities - as we move into the "winter phase" of COVID. Pray for students, teachers, and staff in school/college - in ever-evolving formats of "live", hybrid, virtual, or home-school learning, for employees who are navigating work at their physical work locations and/or at home, and for all in the medical field who are working so hard to keep up with increased demands of testing and hospitalizations, as well as caring for patients as they lose their struggle with the virus.
- All in our faith community who privately hold heavy concerns in their hearts. Help us to reflect God's love and care through our words and deeds that they may know BGUMC as a place of solace, comfort, and trust.



Ellen Kay Gasner of Langdon, ND died recently in her sleep of an aneurysm. She was the wife of LeRoy Gasner, a nephew of Carol Karsten. The Gasners had a wood-working business in Blooming Grove township and built the rugged cross that graces the altar area of our sanctuary. Ellen will be remembered fondly by many members of our congregation. No services will be held. Memorials may be sent in Ellen's memory to the Cavalier County Library, 600 5th Ave, Langdon, ND 58249.



**Blooming Grove Church
Council Special Meeting
November 4, 2020
Carolyn Kanne, Council Secretary**

In attendance (virtually, via Bluejeans): Pastor Kathy, Cindy Saufferer, Chery Southworth, Hjordi Churchill, Judy Mahler, Brian & Carolyn Kanne, Tracie Spinler, Allison Janke

1. Return In-Person Worship – Church Survey
See attached notes from Judy with the results and draft of letter to the congregation.
2. Council resolution requested by the bank for building loan (see attached). Brian moved to accept the resolution as presented. Allison seconded. Motion carried.
3. Prairie Lakes Parish Charge Conference – Sunday, November 29, 7:00 pm via Bluejeans
4. This will be the Charge Conference for our three churches only. Forms, the budget, and so on will be needed by 11/10.
5. We will need a finance team meeting to set the budget. Hjordi will send out some possible dates.
6. Christmas poinsettias from Greenwald's. Chery received a letter from Greenwald's regarding ordering poinsettias. Since it is highly unlikely that we will be back in the sanctuary by then, we discussed giving people the option to donate to the Love Offering instead, and make it in memory or honor of someone. If people still would like a poinsettia for their home, Cindy is willing to make a run to pick them up and people may pick them up from her house. We need to present this in The Visitor. Carolyn will write something up for the poinsettia ordering portion. Judy will write up the donation to the Love Offering portion.
7. PPRC met 10/27 to discussion Pastor Kathy's compensation package. The percentage split among the churches will stay the same for 2021: 38% each for Waterville and Blooming Grove; 24% for Janesville. Pastor Kathy will be switching over to Medicare next year, so there will no longer be a charge for health coverage through the conference.
8. Tracie asked about our annual Adopt-A-Family for this COVID year. We are still willing to try to do something, if anything is available. Tracie will check with the NHS at Medford School. Cindy contacted Beth to see if we can do anything directly through the county. Beth will check.

Pastor Kathy closed with prayer.

**Blooming Grove Church Council Meeting
December 2, 2020**

Carolyn Kanne, Council Secretary

In attendance (virtually, via Bluejeans): Hjordi Churchill, Pastor Kathy King, Chery Southworth, Dave & Sheryl Brisel, Cindy Saufferer, Brad & Tracie Spinler, Brian & Carolyn Kanne, Judy Mahler

Prior Council Minutes

Approved as submitted.

Finance

- Treasurer and Financial Secretary report: Treasurer's report reviewed – no questions. Financial Secretary – income is currently adequate.
- 2021 Budget: New budget submitted – already approved at Charge Conference. A new line item has been added – interest on the construction loan.

Nominations Committee Update

- 2021 Officers/Teams/Committees Update: All positions are filled except for the Treasurer. We thanked Tracie for her years of service.
- Treasurer Position: Remains Open. Paying someone to do this would be an option.
 - * The conference provided ideas on software.
 - * One option would be to hire a person from the conference office to do the bookwork.
 - * Brad mentioned that his bookkeeper might be a possibility. She's from Waseca (so more local). He will check with her. It would probably be at an hourly rate, as the time required fluctuates.
 - * The church books are already on QuickBooks.

COVID-19

- Pastor Kathy - Updates, including any from MN Conference: We are currently in "Red" Phase; no in-person worship is recommended.
- Pastor Kathy - On-Line Worship and plans for Advent and Christmas: Zoom services for each church.
- Carolyn - Outreach taking place in December: Carolyn and Deanna are working on sewing projects for the littlest of our worshippers: masks geared toward their interests or blankets for the smallest. They asked whether the Ed Committee has any Christmas plans for the kids. Sheryl will check with the others.
- Judy - BGUMC Advent Vespers: Michael had the idea of having Judy record accompaniment to familiar Christmas carols for us to sing at home. She and Hjordi have been experimenting with how best to make it work.
- Pastor Kathy: Planning a Zoom Service of Lament for those who are mourning events of this year. Stay tuned.

Trustees

- Church Cleaning Position: Brad reported that Brad

Saufferer has arranged for Ken Harren to take over at a rate of \$15 per hour. This will begin when we can get back into the building.

Building Project

- Trustees - Construction updates: The concrete is done, the plumbing is in and inspected (virtually, no less), and both contractors have been paid. Ammon will probably start construction after Christmas.
- Brian - Line of Credit/Construction Loan Update: We've cleared all the bank's hoops and are all set up.
- Carolyn - Update RE MN Conference Builders East Grant Status and/or other grant information: Haven't heard anything on the grant application. Cindy mentioned that there is a change in who's in charge; it is now the Minnesota United Methodist Foundation. Donna Dempewolf, who served as our Charge Conference Presiding Elder, is the chair. Cindy will send the information to Carolyn and Hjordi.
 - * Carolyn also contacted the Kanne-Marzahn-Minske family reunion chair to get the information out in front of the family and provide information for making donations. It's been placed on the KMM Facebook page. (BGUMC is always included in the reunion tour of historic family sites.)
 - * She also checked on the MN Historical Society program. The nearest deadline is January 8th, with another following in April. Judy mentioned our contact at the Steele County Historical Society, and Carolyn will get in touch with him again.
- Hjordi - Builder's Risk Insurance: Our application has been submitted.

Additional Ministry Updates

- Update from BGUMC teams/groups, i.e. Education, Communications, UMW: No reports.
- Updates from Pastor Kathy, including:
 - * Clinical Pastoral Education – She is currently taking a congregational care class.
 - * Course of Study
- Mission focus for Advent/Christmas:
 - * Conference Love Offering
 - * Adopt-A-Family Update: After our last meeting, Tracie and Cindy found out information about the Steele County Adopt-A-Family and the Emma Norton gift card program. We discussed via email and appear to have landed on the gift card program, as it is much easier this year logistically. Cindy will send out an email within a day to alert the congregation. Cindy is making a trip to Emma Norton soon, and will include a deadline to get cards to her in the email, as well as a direct mailing address for those who prefer that method.

Other Items

- Kathy read a note from Norm Witt.

The Winter of the Big Snow Incarnate-Emmanuel: God With Us - God In Us - God Through Us



In these days of COVID-19, we miss the ability to gather in person to experience the sights and sounds of Advent and Christmas. In this context, we share with you the story of “The Winter of the Big Snow” – as told in our 2018 Sunday School Christmas Program. That snowy winter, people from our church were getting ready. They prepared food for Thanksgiving guests, made a manger for Jesus, cleared roads by the church, and waited for the promise of Easter. In the middle of it all, they experienced Emmanuel – God With Us - through the kindness and care of their neighborhood community as people reached out to help one another. 70 years later, “The Winter of COVID-19” is upon us, and we are called again to get ready – to prepare for the coming of Jesus in our world: Incarnate-Emmanuel, God With Us, God In Us, God Through Us. We are called again to help our neighbors near and far in any way we can - and we see amazing evidence of that every day. Even though we can't be physically together right now, we celebrate that God continues to work through us!

A Thanksgiving Turkey

The Winter of the Big Snow started in November in the year 1950. Faye Kanne, a current member of BGUMC, was 13 years old and her sister Darlene was a senior in high school. Their family lived on County Road 23 - just east of church. It is the same house where Brian and Carolyn Kanne and family live now! Faye's parents were hosting Thanksgiving dinner that year. Faye's mom had gotten the turkey early, but didn't have room to keep it frozen at their house. She stored it in the freezer at their neighbors' house, Mr. & Mrs. Zander. A couple of days before Thanksgiving, Faye's mom knew that they had to retrieve the turkey and start thawing it, but - there had been a big snowstorm and all the roads were blocked! The snowplows hadn't come yet. How were they going to get that turkey? The neighbor's son, Don Zander, was also a senior in high school that year. He came to the rescue! He loaded up the turkey, got on this dad's tractor, and started out through the snow to deliver it. With a mile to go, the snow stopped him. He got off the tractor, put that turkey under his arm, and walked the last mile through the snowdrifts to deliver it to Faye's mom. Five years later, Faye's sister Darlene married that good-looking neighbor boy who delivered the Thanksgiving turkey!

(Continued on next page)

100 Inches

By Christmas Day 1950, the people who lived near BGUMC had almost 30 inches of snow. And it kept snowing! Just when they thought spring would come, it snowed 40 more inches in March! The city of Owatonna recorded a total of 100 inches of snow that winter. To make matters worse, it was also REALLY cold. People had trouble getting their animals in and out of the barns and had trouble keeping buildings warm. Many times they couldn't even drive on their roads. At one point, County Road 23, just east of the church, was blocked shut with snow for two days. They had to break it open with a rotary plow. People had to help each other a lot.

A Christmas Manger

June McColley was a Sunday School teacher for the little kids at the Bethel Methodist Church, the Sunday School part of our current building. One evening, in November or December of 1950, she went to a meeting to plan the Christmas program. When she came home, she contacted her brother-in-law, Clayton McColley, and asked if he could make a cradle or a manger for baby Jesus - just something simple and homemade. It wasn't supposed to be fancy. They wanted it to be the kind of manger that the innkeeper might have made for his stable in Bethlehem. Clayton lived just down the road from our church. He pondered about how to make that manger. He knew that there were some little "popple" trees in a slough just ¼ mile east of his house, and thought they would be perfect! There was already a lot of snow on the ground by then, and the only way to get to the trees was to hitch a team of horses to a sled and go through the snow. He made it to the slough, cut off some trees, loaded them on the sled, and went back to his house. It was so cold that Clayton couldn't keep his shop warm enough to work in. He had to create the manger in his house, and couldn't use his bigger shop tools. He cut all the trees into pieces by hand and then peeled off the bark, kind of like peeling a banana. Then he nailed the pieces of wood together to make a manger. At first Clayton was disappointed that he couldn't use his good tools to make the manger absolutely perfect. After all, it was to be a cradle to hold the Son of God. But then he remembered that the request was for something simple and homemade. It needed to represent the kind of manger in which Jesus was born. He knew it was okay. P.S. - Clayton's manger has been used in every Christmas Program at BGUMC since that time.

6 Men and a Snowplow

In those days, the gravel roads didn't have wide ditches beside them. With really high field banks right next to the roads, there was no place to push all of the snow. Every time that more snow came, or the wind blew, the roads drifted shut - sometimes to the tops of the field banks. The snowplows were not very powerful and

didn't have today's equipment. If a storm was bad enough, even the snowplows needed help. That winter, the Immanuel Methodist Church, the sanctuary part of our current building, was still located 3 miles to the west of BGUMC, on a gravel road, by the farm where Marlis Mahler lives now. It was right next to the farm where Trudi Remund-Fisher grew up. After one big storm in February or March, the snowplow couldn't break through the drifts on the road by the church. The road was totally blocked and people were snowed in for days. Things were getting desperate. Five dairy farmers who lived by the Immanuel Methodist church, knew they had to do something! They had to get their milk to the creamery in order to empty their milk cans so that they could keep milking their cows and not have to dump the milk out in the snow. They also had to get to town to deliver their eggs for sale and to buy groceries for their families and feed for their livestock! Four of those farmers went to the Immanuel Methodist Church: Burch Mahler, Glenn Mahler, Willie Remund, and Marvin Sutter. They set out together with their other neighbor, Raymond Thompson, and their Methodist minister, Rev. John Timperley, to help the snowplow. They started one night after the evening chores were done. The snowplow had a triangle blade. First, the snowplow would ram a hard drift and chip some blocks of snow free. Then the men shoveled the snow aside - into the field, allowing the plow to ram again. Many times, the men had to go ahead of the plow and break the snowdrifts by making vertical cuts with shovels in the hard-packed snow. Then the plow could ram and push the snow again. The men shoveled snow like this all night, until 5 AM, when they had to go back home to milk their cows. Trudi Remund-Fisher remembers her mom dressing her and her brother up like little snowmen to send them down beyond the parsonage that stood next to the Immanuel Methodist Church, with sandwiches and coffee for those hard-working men. Trudi also remembers that people had to walk across the fields to the highway to get the mail for everyone in the neighborhood.

A Sleigh Ride for Easter

Surely there would be no snow for Easter Sunday - that would be on March 25, 1951! Guess what? It snowed!! Harold and Eleanor Saufferer lived on the farm just ¼ mile east of the church - where Brad and Cindy Saufferer and Bruce Saufferer live now. On Easter Sunday morning, there was so much snow that they had to hook up a team of horses to a sleigh just to get out of their yard. They drove the horses to the house of Harold's mom and dad, Jess and Nora Saufferer. The road from Jess and Nora's house had been plowed enough for a car to get through! So they put the horses in the shed and drove the car to church for Easter!

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Building Update

By Brad Saufferer

If Christ is the solid rock on which we stand, our new addition has the next best thing. Our concrete contractor, Marvin Purrier, commented that the architect's plans called for industrial sized footing and that's what we got. Marvin also donated the use of his concrete blankets to keep the concrete from freezing until the structure is built. Thank you Marvin.

The floor heat is installed, the concrete is poured, drain pipe laid, and all is ready for the carpenter to come and create us a building. The carpenter, Ammon, and his trusty side kick, Hank, arrived Friday to measure and compare the foundation to the plans and proclaimed it near perfect.

Those of you who been following the project know that Ammon gave us a substantial discount for letting him build over the winter to keep his crew busy. We are anticipating a January or February start and a spring completion.

We prayerfully ask you to keep the donations coming in for the building fund. The trustees are also working on an exciting opportunity to purchase a piece of church history with all the proceeds going to the building fund.

Pray for us, support us. This is so very exciting and a huge step forward for the church as we come through these extraordinary times.

