



THE VISITOR

BGUMC Advent and Christmas

Thank you to Pastor Kathy and everyone from BGUMC who worked together to create meaningful Advent and Christmas gatherings in December, including our:

- 5-minute virtual Advent Vespers each Sunday evening on our BGUMC Facebook page
- “Live” ZOOM Service of Lament
- “Live” Bluejeans Christmas Eve Service
- Virtual December 27th service of lessons and carols, shared through our Facebook page.

Thank you to all members and friends of the congregation who “gathered” for these Advent and Christmas services. On Christmas Eve, it was such a gift to be able to wave at one another, see how the children of our congregation have grown, and wish one another Merry Christmas!

A special thanks to Brad Spinler and his daughter Kristen Krell, who joined us “live” for our Christmas Eve service from the sanctuary of BGUMC, where they rang the bell to begin our service and where Brad read the Christmas story from Luke. Brad’s photo of the church, lit up in the dark sky of Christmas Eve, was breath-taking.

In the midst of COVID-19, we are blessed to have ways in which we can still connect, and blessed to have people who are willing to figure out how to make that happen!

Thank You for Your Prayers

Pastor Sharon Nelson sends her sincere thanks to our BGUMC community for the prayers and caring concern we have shared over the past months for her brother from Sullivan, MO - Ron Franklin, his wife Teresa, and their family. Ron traveled a long journey in his battle with a variation of the rare Hairy Cell Leukemia - and passed away on November 20th. Pastor Sharon, her husband Robert, and Pastor Sharon’s mother were able to be in Missouri with Ron and his family at the time of his passing. Pastor Sharon shared the story of her cherished brother - as captured here from his obituary:



Ron taught Vo Ag at North Platte High School for a year, and enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1968, serving as a Navy Pilot. He flew the S-2 Tracker on the USS Wasp and USS Intrepid, completing 186 carrier landings. He then attended the Univ. of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine. After completing his studies, he moved to Sullivan where his practice grew to include several veterinarians, a dedicated staff, and numerous clients. He enjoyed serving the community’s large and small animal needs. He was respected for his exceptional knowledge, his kindness, and easy-going nature. After 36 years of dedicated service, Ron left the practice to focus on his health, family, and other interests.

Incarinate Emmanuel, God with Us, God in Us, God through Us Stories from the Steeples: BGUMC Past and Present

In these days of the pandemic, while we await mass roll-out of a vaccine, and are limited in our ability to connect in-person, it becomes easy to lose sight of God’s goodness that continues to surround us. In times like these, story-telling becomes a life-line...a candle that helps illuminate the darkness...a message of God, and from God, that brings hope.

In that spirit, we invite you, throughout 2021, to join in a story-telling adventure and share your “Stories from the Steeples: BGUMC Past and Present”! We look forward to hearing your memories of where have you seen God’s Spirit, and God’s people, working and moving, laughing and weeping, caring and sharing - in our midst, or moving out into the world from our twin steeples.

We serendipitously began this story-telling journey in our December Visitor by sharing memories from Norman Witt, pastor of BGUMC and Morristown Peace UMC from 1968-1973, and by sharing stories from The Winter of the Big Snow (1950-1951). This triggered memories for Roger Wilkowske, who graced us this past month with his wonderful stories. (Story found on the insert page.) We invite you to jot down your “Stories from the Steeples - BGUMC Past and Present” - and email them to Judy Mahler (hcjm@charter.net) or Chery Southworth (CherySouth@gmail.com). They can be stories from years ago, or from as recently as yesterday! They can be random short snippets or full-fledged descriptions of events. Chery and Judy will pull them together to share them here in the Visitor in the months ahead as reminders of God’s ongoing presence - with us, in us, and through us - even in the midst of a pandemic. Thank you.

2021
Happy New Year

January 2021: The Promise of a New Beginning



January brings the promises that all new years bring to our lives—the TV commercials promise help with “a new me!”, new financial security, new homes, and new products! 2021 is a new year that many of us are hoping will bring an end to seclusion; an end to staying away from our dear friends and family members. For many, 2021 is a promise of a new beginning filled with hope.

Our advent and Christmas services were filled with stories surrounding the peace, hope, joy, and love that can be ours throughout the year when we claim the baby Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Titus reminds us of our inheritance as those who accept our lineage as the children of God in chapter 3, verses 4-7:

“But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

It was a rough 2020 but God led us through and will continue to lead us through the Leadership Team who made hard decisions. We all miss our sanctuaries and the connection we feel when we gather in those places to worship. Many of our United Methodist brothers and sisters followed the guidance of our health experts and our retired Bishop Ough. I pray that the vaccines created to protect our world from the continued ravages of the Coronavirus pandemic will lead to joyous gatherings in our faith homes!

The new year brings a change to our conference leadership. We will be led by our interim Bishop David Bard. Many know David who was a Pastor in our Minnesota Conference prior to being appointed Bishop. Our January 10th virtual service will feature Bishop Bard’s reflection. I will be recuperating from foot surgery which offers me a time to rest while I heal. Our January 3rd virtual service will be a service created by our Minnesota Conference and featuring music groups from Minnesota churches and our Minnesota District Superintendents offering messages.

I look forward to this year being the year we see one another, hug one another, and see the light each was created to be!

Be well dear ones, wear your masks, keep washing those hands and Happy New Year!

Pastor Kathy

Happy Birthday



December		
30	Marge Wilkowske	22 Linda Kosel
January		23 Haley Nagel
4	Charlie Brecht	25 Callie Nagel
10	Burch Buchholz	25 Jim Nagel
10	Jerry Mahler	28 Brad Spinler
13	Jennifer (Danks) Beck	30 Annette Sharp
17	Derek Bartosch	30 JJ Morgan
19	Chris Fyvie	31 Erin Nelson

Christmas Surprises for Our Littles

It all started with a piece of fabric... Deanna Kanne purchased a piece of fabric to make some masks for a friend of hers who is a little dinosaur crazy. She showed her purchase to Carolyn and said, "Bradley would really like this, too." Thus sprouted an idea to craft some gifts for the youngest of our church family. After checking with a few grandmas (who know what their grandkids are into), the fabric shopping began. Eventually, there were themed masks for the bigger kids (Trolls, dinosaurs, Frozen, etc.) and blankets for the two babies (Peanuts) – see photo above. The Education and Events Team provided ornaments and such for each child, and a fun package was assembled for delivery. Thanks to the various church elves who made the deliveries!



Treasurer's Report

December 2 -December 28, 2020



General Budget Income	\$ 2,455.00
Expenses	
Conference Claim	1,378.90
Sunday School Materials	120.74
Excel Energy	66.87
Loan Interest	<u>80.25</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 1,646.76
(Net Income: + \$ 808.24)	

Other Income Received

Cemetery	650.00
Restoration	850.00
Visitor	25.00
Love Offering	180.00
Poinsettias	88.00

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.

Thank you for the mission offering given by Faye Kanne in memory of Harold Kanne.

Welcome Maisie Joan Morgan

Maisie Joan Morgan was born December 8th to Tyler and Alex Morgan.

She weighed in at 8 lbs. 12 oz. and is 20.5" long.



Big sister, Penelope, is absolutely in love with her baby sister!

Lots of hugs and kisses!

Congratulations to the Morgans.



Thank You

Thank you from Kaylee, Leah and Bowen for gifts from the church for Christmas. It was very kind to think of us, can't wait to be back in the church and see everyone.



**Stories from the Steeples:
BGUMC Past and Present
Memories from
Roger Wilkowske**

(Roger grew up attending the Bethel - north - portion of BGUMC.)

Enjoyed the VISITOR as always. Back to all of the snows in 1950, my parents, Herb & Doris Wilkowske, still had work horses and a useable bobsled (complete with a horsehair blanket) so used this method of getting their milk to the Morristown Co-Op Creamery, sometimes driving in the fields to avoid deeper snows on the road which had blown off the fields! Attending Morristown High School at the time, I remember trying to get to Morristown with my 1928 Model A Ford to see my girlfriend, Marjorie Krause (my wonderful wife of 63 years), thinking that with this light weight car, I could just drive over the top of the hard packed snow. Wrong! So had to walk back home and ask my patient father to pull me out once again. How about those rugged farmers, and Rev. Timperly as well, having to walk ahead of the snowplow! This also happened in some areas around our place as that was the only method that worked.

Also in the early 50's as I was approaching Immanuel or the "West" church as we called it, (the south portion of BGUMC - located 3 miles down the road at the time) for our Annual Easter Cantata and Breakfast, I suddenly remembered that I had forgotten the pans of coffee kuchen, a German sweet bread, that mother had made. So I turned around in my Model A and carefully maneuvered icy roads to get back in time for the Cantata via TWA, I Traveled With Angels, that is!

Seems like I remember the wedding of Burch and Dallas Mahler (Judy's folks), possibly during the time my father-in-law, Herb Krause and his crew were "putting the 2 churches together", rain dripping through the canvass covered gap between the two buildings. (Herb also built homes for farmers in the neighborhood - Glenn Mahler, Willie Remund, and Don Remund, and remodeled the farmhouse kitchen for Burch Mahler.)

When the Immanuel building was moved down the road to be connected to the Bethel building (north part of BGUMC), I rode along, and remember



mover.

Other memories include the Saturday night choir practices with Dallas Mahler, choir director. I remember hearing Rev. Perkins during his last sermon, repeatedly saying that Jesus was the way, the truth and the light (how true!), having to ask Dallas, the pianist, what the next song was, and learning later that week that he had passed away from a brain tumor.

I also remember our catechism class every Saturday morning at Rev. Timperly's parsonage with Audrey Saufferer, Lois Karsten, Noel Kanne and Keith Remund.

I remember singing in the BGUMC men's quartet with Lowell Parrish, Wayne Baker, and Harold Kanne, with Dallas Mahler as pianist/coach. Another memory was when Dallas was taking a car full of choir members to Faribault for some mass choir event on a winter evening with snow packed roads. As we were approaching Hwy 60 south of Warsaw coming down a hill she applied the brakes and slid to a stop just short of the highway. She thanked the Lord and remarked "Was this predestination or what??"

Other memories include a summer watermelon feed and one act play put on by our Methodist Youth Fellowship, a trip to the Grotto of the Redemption in Iowa with Mr. & Mrs. Lyle Parrish as our chaperones, the Annual Fall Roast Chicken Suppers that were "finger lickin' good", MYF Christmas Caroling to shut-ins, and board games at the church basement followed by the New Year's Eve Watchnight Service. Wonderful ways to have fellowship and build one another up in the Body of Christ.

Happy New Year!



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.

- 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 anxiously await the return of funding for genetic testing (currently reallocated to COVID-19), as it may provide hoped-for answers for Bowen's medical concerns.
- Carolyn Kanne, and her family, as they mourn the death of her aunt, Leona, who had been hospitalized after tripping and falling and breaking two ribs, all complicated by underlying lung and heart conditions.
- Prayers of thanks for Elizabeth, daughter of Chuck and Linda Danks, who has now recovered from COVID-19.
- Prayers of thanks for Don and Char who have recovered from COVID-19.
- Prayers of gratitude for the returned health of Pastor Kathy and Jerry King's grandson, Milo - who, thankfully, did not have COVID-19.
- Danni, a coworker of Ryan Saufferer. Danni was just diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She is 28 years old and has a 17-month old daughter. Please pray that a gentle peace settles on, and securely holds onto, Danni and all those near and dear to her.
- Del - who was hospitalized multiple times in the month of December and who battles ongoing health concerns.
- Tracie Spinler's co-worker's grandson who is struggling through difficult days.
- Tracie Spinler's dear friend, LaVonne, whose daughter's father-in-law has been hospitalized with COVID-19.
- Pastor Kathy, as she undergoes major foot surgery in late December and faces a several-week "totally off your feet" recovery period. Also pray for Jerry King, as he will be providing care for Pastor Kathy, her mom, Dee, and the four-legged

critters at their home.

- Theresa Riecke asks for prayers for her oldest brother's best friend, Clint, whose mother passed away in December. It was an unexpected death at a time when Clint and his wife Mindy are journeying with her father (on hospice) to his end of life. Please send prayers for strength for Clint and Mindy and for comfort from family and friends that is so badly needed right now.
- Prayers of thanks for Marlis Mahler's co-worker and friend, Alicyn, her husband Jared, and their daughter Lily, who are all recovering from COVID-19.
- Prayers for the Hermel family. Dennis was admitted to the hospital and is awaiting test results.
- All members of BGUMC who are in quarantine due to family members or co-workers who have been diagnosed with COVID.
- The family of Ryan McGillen who passed away in his sleep on Christmas Eve. Ryan was 38 years old and leaves behind a wife and two small children. Ryan's father is a friend of the Southworths.
- All in our circle of family, friends, neighbors, communities - as we move into the "after holiday phase" of COVID. Pray for students, teachers, and staff in school/college - as they figure out 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.

It is Christmas!

"It is Christmas every time
you let God love others through you...
Yes, it is Christmas every time you
smile at your brother and
offer him your hand."

- Teresa of Calcutta

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Box 171, Medford, MN 55049

January 2021

The Blooming Grove Visitor

Since 1936

Blooming Grove United Methodist Church

Physical Address:

43089 180th Street, Morristown, MN 55052
(NE corner of Waseca County)

Mail to: P.O. Box 171

Medford, MN 55049-0171

Website: www.bloominggroveumc.org

Email: bloominggroveumc@gmail.com

Check us out on Facebook!

**Pastoral Care and Emergency
and General Pastoral Questions:**

Pastor Kathy King
kking5@hickorytech.net
507-382-2483



Requests for Prayer Chain Email:

Pastor Kathy King at:

kking5@hickorytech.net

Visitor Staff:

Chery Southworth, Visitor Coordinator

26651 Elmore Avenue

Morristown, MN 55052

(507) 339-3534

CherySouth@gmail.com

Judy Mahler, Editor

Carolyn Kanne, Writer

Patti Ellingson, Writer

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Photo captured by Brad Spinler.



Christmas Eve 2020

Blooming Grove UMC - in the midst of a construction project to add a south accessibility entrance.

While the church was empty this Christmas Eve, the light inside reminds us of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the hope that next year we will all be together.

Thank you to all who gathered virtually to celebrate this Holy Night. Blessings to all of our BGUMC families and friends.