

Circuit Writer

December 2025

Dear friends,

We are soon to be in the seasons of Advent and Christmas. I invite you to participate in the various ministries of this season where we can hear once again the wondrous story of how God chose to take on human flesh in and through Jesus Christ! The mystery of the Incarnation is always worth our time to explore in its depth and profound meaning for us.

Starting on Monday, December 1 from 7:00-8:15 p.m., you are invited to participate in a four-week Advent study utilizing a book called "A Child is Born, A Beginner's Guide to Nativity Stories" by Amy-Jill Levine. We will meet at the church building in the Sonshine Conference Room each week. This is a study led by our bishop via Zoom with video and group discussion. You can find the book available in paperback or Kindle on Amazon.

I am also preparing special Advent messages for Sunday morning worship as we look more closely at some of our beloved Christmas carols and the theological insights they express of the meaning of Jesus's birth. Come ready to sing the truths of the Gospel!

On Sunday, December 21, 10:30 a.m., a part of our worship will include our children's Christmas Program. This is always a delightful time to see and hear our children express their faith in story and song.

Finally, on Wednesday, December 24, at 5:30 p.m., we have our candlelight and carol-filled Christmas Eve Worship Service. If you are willing to offer your musical gifts in voice or instrument, I invite you to contact me so we can include you in the worship order. I am also looking for several individuals to serve in reading a number of the scripture passages as we recount the Christmas story.

Celebrating Jesus with you this season,

Pastor Joel

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Where People
Believe, Belong &
Become

Missed worship?
A link to our Sunday
services can be
accessed on our
Facebook page!



Costa Rica Mission Team Update

Thank you for your generosity as the team continues to raise funds for the mission trip to Limon Costa Rica! As our preparations continue, we are very appreciative of your gifts that make this mission opportunity possible. **We are representatives of Mandan UMC in Central America, and your presence will be present as we minister to the people in Costa Rica!** Please continue to pray for this mission trip that minister not only to the people of Limon, but also to each member of the team.

The final itinerary is tentative; however, we know that we will be assisting with Polar Blast VBS, leading a soccer camp, assembling school backpacks with items we will bring to Costa Rica, helping with harvest, painting and replacing doors and door frames at the church, extending a retaining wall and teaching first aid. Hands and Hearts for Jesus (HH4J) mission has missionaries that live in Limon and minister to people full time. Their leader, Sally, stresses the importance of each team learning about the culture of Limon, Costa Rica by providing time for tours to a jaguar rescue, chocolate and coffee factories.

Our team will need to provide funds for our projects, and these costs have yet to be determined. We will also pack items such as VBS snacks, school supplies, paint rollers, a first aid kit and other needed supplies.

School supplies will be needed for the children in Limon. The items below will be collected:

Children's and Youth backpacks (thrift store shoppers – this is a call to action!)

18 Pre-K and Kinder

87 Primary

92 High School

21 University or trade school

Paint aprons

Black Sharpies

#2 pencils

White erasers

Colored pencil boxes

Black pens

Rulers

Compasses (for math)

Scientific calculators (see Lisa for specs)

Masking tape

Pencil cases

Pencil sharpeners

Round-tip scissors

Red pens

Blue pens

Highlighters

White out

Eighteen thousand dollars have already been raised, and we are praiseful for these gifts! The initial estimate of \$22,000 may need to be adjusted to fulfill these needs. Our fundraising efforts will include coffee sales, the Costa Rica Coffee Counter between worship services in December, Jana's jelly donations and individual gifts. We are confident that by God's grace and provision, the goal will be met!

Friday Nite Lite December 12th

Baking cookies, watching a Christmas movie and plenty of tasty food! All youth sixth through 12th grade are welcome to join the fun from 7 to 11 p.m. There will plenty of time for games and the annual gingerbread house competition! Come late or leave early, if needed – just come! We'll leave the LITE on for you!



CHRISTMAS EVE Candlelight Service will be Wednesday, December 24 at 5:30 PM. If anyone would like to help read Scripture or do special music, please call the church office or talk to Pastor Joel or Belinda.



Coffee Time is every Tuesday morning at 10 AM. Join us for fellowship, coffee and snacks!

Lewis & Clark Elementary Outreach

Lewis and Clark Elementary school, just two blocks from Mandan UMC, has many children and families who struggle with many necessities such as food, proper winter clothing and other needs.

For several years, our church family has provided snacks, food and winter meals. Recently their needs have changed and have given MUMC an opportunity to meet those needs. The list below are the current needs for Lewis and Clark families.

Snacks for school children:

protein bars, granola bars, fruit snacks, small bags of nuts and fruit, snack crackers, and small bags of cereal, chips and cookies.

Monetary funds to be used for winter snow gear are also being collected. Please mark your gifts for Lewis and Clark.

Thank you.

A Year Without Christmas Sunday school Christmas Program

A year without Christmas? Could it be true? No brightly decorated tree, no feasting and fun? Nothing can stop the celebration of the Reason for the season!

The Sunday school will present the Christmas program during the 10:30 a.m. worship service on December 21st. Bring your family and friends and enjoy a Christmas story only children and youth can tell.

Christmas program practice will be held during Sunday school at 9 a.m. beginning November 30th, December 7th, 14th and 21st. All children and youth are welcome to take part in the fun!

BISHOP'S THANKSGIVING OFFERING Thank you for your Thanksgiving Offering of \$191.39. This will go to help families in need at Lewis & Clark School.

Wonderful Wednesday, supper and Youth Group will not meet on Wednesday, November 26, Happy Thanksgiving and December 24, Merry Christmas. There is no Sunday School on December 28 or January 4.

BIBLE STUDY



The **Thursday** Morning Bible Study is at 10 AM in the Sonrise Conference Room. All are welcome to attend.



Prayer Concerns

Willow Althoff and Malinda
Carolyn Desper
Bob Samuelson
Agnes Kegley
Betty Leingang
Costa Rica Trip
Colter, Karri Landeis' great nephew
Mary Carter's sister
Colleen Macbeth
Mike Kroh
17 yr. old Joshua, with bone marrow transplant
Lorraine Hallendorff
Sandy & Matt Thorenson
Those receiving medical treatments
Those mourning
Our Country's leaders
Families and friends with cancer
Those traveling
Military and their families
Several unspoken requests



Church Members in Care Facilities

Edgewood Vista Assisted Living Center

Marcie Zabel
Leah Jeromchek
Peachie McArthur
Lucille Risch
Amy Watson (Bismarck)

Miller Point

Jim Mellon

Sunset Prospera

Chloe Leingang

Baptist Home

Virginia Geist



Christmas is right around the corner! Jars of homemade jelly and bags coffee from Costa Rica would make gifts to coworkers, teachers, family and friends! Please take a moment to peruse the selection!

A very special thank you to Jana Knoll for picking fruit and making jellies for our Costa Rica mission trip! Thank you for your time and lovingly preparing this jelly for our team!

Give to Mandan UMC via Electronic Fund Transfer

Download the user-friendly app on your smart phone. You may designate your gift utilizing the categories listed in the application. Please contact the church office if you have questions or need further information.

You can give through Vanco for any end of year giving. It will need to be given by Wednesday, December 31. Thank your for your generosity.

Blood Drive



Thank you to all who donated blood in November. We potentially saved up to 36 lives! The next blood drive will be Feb. 2026

Men's Group

Thank you to the guys who helped with the Wonderful Wednesday After School group on November 12. It was a fun time and we appreciated the time you spent with the children. Everyone enjoyed it!

Chili Cook-off & Bake Sale for Costa Rica

**Mission Trip
November 23rd at
11:30 a.m.**



Enter your best chili recipe for your chance to win the coveted "Chili Champ" title! Bring your best baked goods to include in a bake sale. A sign-up sheet for chili and baked goods is in the east hallway.

Bring your family and friends to join us at 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, the 23rd to enjoy chili with toppings, dessert and warm fellowship. Browse the bake sale and take home some treats for later. A free will offering will be received for the Costa Rica mission team.

December Birthdays

1	Joseph Richter
2	Adrian Watts
4	Nixon Neuberger
6	Garmon Winckler
7	Lynda Miller
9	Naomie Reich-Swenningson
10	Noah Olson
12	Erica Newgard
16	Jodi Sneva
19	Deb Leingang Carson Edwards Crew Hauck
24	Joni Olson
25	Jaxon Sundahl
27	Eric Stom
30	Dori Rebenitsch Sara Jones
31	Carlynn Turner



END OF YEAR GIVING —If you wish to give to the church in general or for special projects before the end of the year, please have your check in to the church by Wednesday, December 31. If you are mailing a donation, it needs to be postmarked by December 31 to be included in this years giving. **Thank you** for your generosity.

VISITATION

Please contact the church office if you would like a visit in your home or in the hospital.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS
& HAPPY NEW YEAR
FROM THE STAFF
AT MANDAN UMC!!**

December Anniversaries

4	Nikki & Rob Pedersen	15 yrs.
6	Diane & Wayne Frenzel	45 yrs.
16	Brianna & Eric Ricard	2 yrs.
23	Cozette & Chad Bender	9 yrs.
27	Gerry & Billy Ann Caya	54 yrs.



Prayer Chain— Thank you to all who agreed to participate in prayer Chain. Updated copies will be emailed to you.

ADVENT ADVENT BEGINS



We are looking for families, or a small group or individuals to light the Advent Wreath during Advent. If you would like to do this, please talk with Belinda, call or email the church.

If anyone would like to do special music during Advent, please talk to Pastor Joel or Belinda or call the office.

OFFICE NOTES

The church office is opened Monday through Friday 9:15 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The next newsletter will go out December 18 at 1PM.

If anyone would like to become a member of Mandan United Methodist Church or need to transfer your membership from another church, call the church office.

Belinda will be out of the office Dec. 4—11.

