



Epiphany – It's Time to Take a Look!

As we look at the church calendar, we see that in January we begin the season of Epiphany (which means “revelation”). It is a season where we take our cue from the wise men and take a look at what God is revealing to us in the sky above, in the words of ancient Scripture, in the Baby Jesus, and in the depths of our own heart and soul.

Look Up! It was wise men from the East who looked up and saw the star that told them a special King had been born. They kept looking as they followed that star which led them to Jesus. Take time one evening to look up at the stars, marvel at God’s creation, and commit yourself to following Jesus.

Look Back! When the wise men got to Jerusalem, they asked King Herod, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews?” Matthew 2:2. Herod called the chief priests and scribes to look back into the Scriptures. They found the answer in the words of the prophet Micah: “You, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.” Micah 5:2. Let us look at the words of Scripture that declare to us that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, the fulfillment of all the prophecies of old, the revelation of all the promises of God.

Look Down! When the wise men found the child Jesus, they looked down, as they knelt before the Son of God and worshiped him. Only then did they give their gifts to the Lord. In this time of Epiphany, Let us bow our heads in prayer to the Savior, to come to church for worship, and to humbly offer our gifts to the One who has given so much to us – forgiveness, renewal, peace, hope, joy, and love.

Look Around! The wise men who came “from the East” represent for us the Good News that God sent Jesus to earth to save all people from every part of the world. It is time, therefore, to look around at all the people in your



Pastor's Desk continued.....

neighborhood, workplace, circle of friends and share the Good News of Jesus' birth with those who may not have heard about this blessed event or don't have a connection to a church family.

Look Ahead! The gifts the wise men brought to Jesus foretold the future of this tiny baby now before them. The royal gift of gold signifies the kingship of Jesus, who will reign over heaven and earth forevermore. Frankincense, a fragrant gum resin, was burned as incense in places of worship, and de-notes the future priesthood of Christ and the divinity of Christ, who will make intercessions to God on our behalf. Myrrh is a perfume often used in embalming, so it is a

reminder that Christ was also fully human and will give himself up for our sins and be laid in a tomb before his resurrection on Easter Day.

Look Inside! This season of Epiphany is a time for us to look inside of our own hearts and see how God in Christ has revealed himself to us. Just as Jesus' mother Mary, "treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart," (Luke 2:19) we, too, need to allow the meaning of the coming of Christ into the world to sink into our bodies, minds, and souls. Through prayer, scripture reading, and reflection, we open the door to divine revelation.

Blessings and see you in church!
Pastor Joyce <><



Join Us In Person or Online for the Following Messages:

(Bring a friend – they'll be glad you did!)

January 7th Communion,

"The Codex Sassoon", (Genesis 1:1-5),

\$38 million for a Bible? How much is your Bible worth?

January 14th "Eli's Gift", (1 Samuel 3:1-10; 11-20),

God's call is not always spectacular. Sometimes we need to let the silence speak.

January 21st "Wayfinding with Jesus", (Mark 1:14-20),

Love, justice, healing and hope are landmarks that will help us find our destination and understand the journey.

January 28th "Recipe for Divinity", (1 Corinthians 8:1-13),

Food will not bring us close to God. Something else will, and it's not the confection described as "a taste of heaven."



TIS THE SEASON – to turn up & down the heat!

Please be sure if you turn up the heat (to 68, unless really cold out) that you also turn it down (to 58) when you leave the room or building. This helps keep our heating costs down.





Coffee & Conversation with Pastor Joyce

Come on down to the church of your choice and talk about whatever is on your mind: questions about the Bible, United Methodist doctrine & happenings, and getting to know me more, are all topics that are welcome.

Tuesdays 2 – 3:30 pm @ **Dent**, Thursdays 2—3:30 @ **Vergas**, for the remainder of January. Who knows, there might even be treats involved for those who stop by!



SAVE YOUR RECIEPTS FROM **central market**

Each church is asking everyone to save their receipts from Central Market (be sure the cashier stamps them with the red “we care” stamp). These are turned in for rebates and the money has been used for mission work as well as helping to pay for things around the church. Place your receipts and codes in the labeled box – that’s all you have to do. We have earned many dollars through this program.



VERGAS IS LOOKING FOR EMPTY SHOE BOXES

Continue to bring your empty shoe boxes to church all year round. We have a special member that wraps them for us to use for Samaritan’s Purse. Thank you!



The Vergas Church Ladies

Next Meeting
Jan 11th 12:30pm

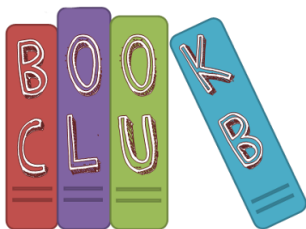


SPPRC Meeting

Wed, Jan 10th
6pm at Dent

Ad Council

Wednesday, Jan 17th
Dent 3:00pm
Vergas 6:30pm



Next Meeting
Tues, Jan 9th 12:30pm at
Billy’s in Vergas



Dent Breakfast Club

meets at Mysteries Café (Nootzies) at
9am on the 1st Wednesday of the
month



The needs of God’s ministry are constant, please be sure your giving is current, especially over this last month of the year. If you are not able to be in church, please mail in your tithes and offerings to the addresses listed below. Make your offerings in advance of Sundays you will be gone.

Dent mail to: Karen Johnson, 33875 Downey Dr, Dent MN 56528

Vergas mail to : Sheri Schoenberger, 36755 Hungry Lake Ln, Frazee MN 56544 or Tithe online at dentvergasumc.org



2024 Lenten Study Begins Feb. 13th

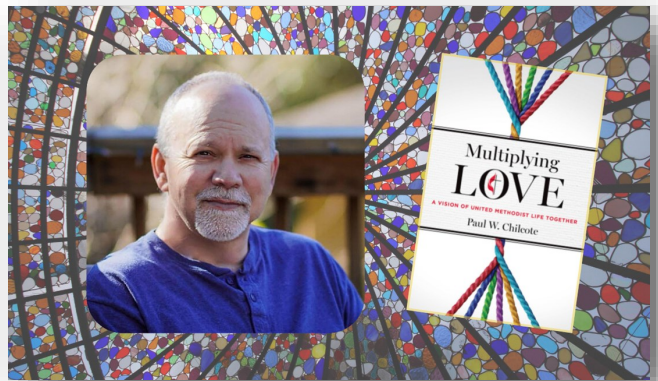
Join Bishop Lanette Plambeck and the Dakotas and Minnesota Conference Appointive Cabinets in a Lenten study around the book *Multiplying Love: A Vision of United Methodist Life Together*, by Paul Chilcote, who was one of Pastor Joyce’s professors at Methodist Theological School in Ohio.

The book invites us to explore the power of the Wesleyan approach to the gospel and a compelling case for the future of The United Methodist Church. Our world needs love during these desperate days of radical polarization and division. Our United Methodist churches yearn to embrace love more completely because God first loved us.

Our “faith” (including doctrine) is important; Christian “hope” (including renewal) is important; “love” of God and neighbor is more important. *Multiplying Love: A Vision of United Methodist Life Together* underscores what matters most and stands in contrast to divisive misreadings of essential Methodist teachings. Chilcote helps us embrace anew the Wesleyan vision of love of Jesus as central to what we believe and how we live.

What you need to know

At the beginning of February, we will make a nine-video series available on this web page. Churches and individuals can use videos whenever and however they choose, but every week between Ash Wednesday, (Feb. 14) and Holy Week, and then throughout Holy Week, we



will feature the videos in our e-newsletters. Accompanying each video will be a small group discussion guide, a bulletin insert, a video transcript, and social media graphics. We invite and encourage your congregation to participate in this study! Gather (in-person or via Zoom) to watch each video, and then use the small group discussion guide to engage in conversation. A final Easter video message from Bishop Lanette Plambeck will be released during Holy Week.

Sign up on the sheets being passed around on Sunday mornings by January 21st so a \$15.00 book can be ordered for you (scholarship help with the cost of the book is available to anyone).

Study will begin the week of February 11th

**Dent Tuesdays
10 am and 6:30 pm Online**

Vergas Thursdays 10 am

Continued on the next page....

Lenten Study continued...

Video schedule

Video 1 (Ash Wednesday message): *Our Purpose*, Rev. Dan Bader, Southwest District Superintendent, Dakotas Conference

Video 2: *Always Renewing*, Rev. Laurie Kantonen, North Star District Superintendent, Minnesota Conference

Video 3: *Love Is the Highest Gift*, Rev. Rebecca Trefz, Southeast District Superintendent and Director of Ministries, Dakotas Conference

Video 4: *Why We Need to Embrace Unity*, Rev. Joel Winckler, Northwest District Superintendent, Dakotas Conference

Video 5: *The Peaceable Reign of Christ*, Rev. Michelle Hargrave, River Valley District Superintendent, Minnesota Conference

Video 6: *The Opportunity Before Us*, Rev. Kris Mutzenberger, Northeast District Superintendent, Dakotas Conference

Video 7: *The Church as a Community of Inclusive Love and Grace*, Rev. Cynthia Williams, Twin Cities District Superintendent, Minnesota Conference.

Video 8 (Holy Thursday message): *Discovering Love Again for the First Time*, Rev. Cindy Gregorson, Director of Connectional Ministries and Clergy Assistant to the Bishop, Minnesota Conference

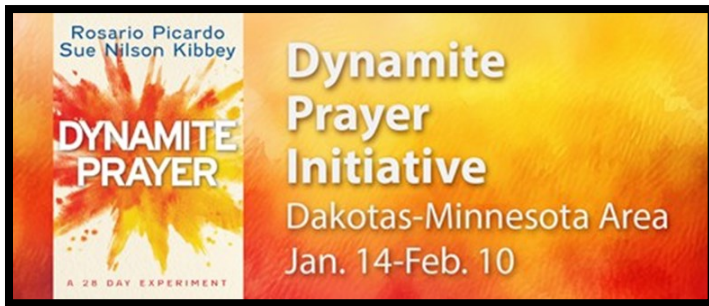
Video 9 (Good Friday message): *A Vision for the Refreshed United Methodist Church*, Rev. Woojae Im, Southern Prairie District Superintendent, Minnesota Conference

Easter message: Bishop Lanette Plambeck, Resident Bishop, Dakotas-Minnesota Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church



Church Mission's
for the Quarter have not been
determined yet they will be in
the February newsletter





By: Christa Meland

When Rev. Dr. Rosario “Roz” Picardo was serving at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, the seminary was at a crossroads and had decided to schedule a strategic planning retreat to see if stakeholders might identify next steps for future growth. The facilitator, Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey, suggested that United’s retreat attendees engage in breakthrough prayer each day for the six weeks prior to the retreat, asking God to reveal new possibilities in order to prepare their hearts, minds, and spirits for the gathering. Picardo developed a prayer based on a specific scriptural verse, and attendees prayed it for the six weeks prior to their meeting—asking God to break through with new ideas and possibilities for the seminary they loved. After their day-and-a-half retreat and speaking what they’d heard from God in response to their breakthrough prayers, they had named more than 500 ideas for the seminary’s future. Everyone acknowledged the spiritually pivotal nature of the retreat in generating new momentum for United, and remembered it had all started with prayer

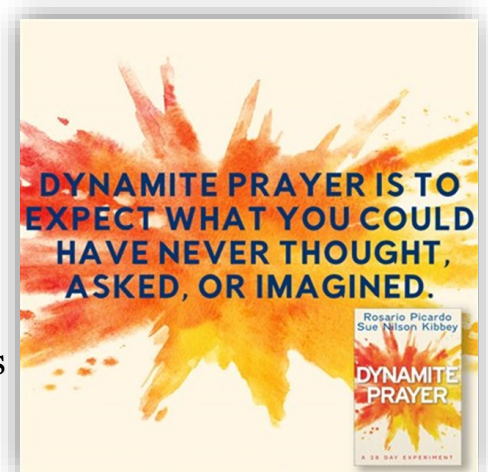
Are you ready to see what God can do in your life, your congregation, and the Minnesota Annual Conference when we come together in prayer and ask God’s Spirit to unleash in us? Bishop Lanette Plambeck invites all Dakotas and Minnesota United Methodists to join our “Dynamite Prayer Initiative” (based on a book of the same name, written by

Dynamite Prayer Initiative: 3 key things to know

Picardo and Kibbey) from Jan. 14-Feb. 10. The book will help you incorporate a surrendered prayer practice into your daily life following Christ, and help you cultivate your capacity to discern, to notice, to respond to God’s guidance, and to live by the power of the Holy Spirit. Here’s what you need to know, how you can participate, and some ideas for infusing breakthrough prayer into the life of your congregation:

What is breakthrough prayer?

Many faithful Christians spend ask God through prayer to heal, to comfort, to protect, to provide, and to bless loved ones and themselves. But breakthrough prayer involves “asking God’s new possibilities to break through, inviting God the Almighty to open new doors, and along with it, your commitment that you’ll surrender all you are now to make room for all God longs to unfold,” Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey explains at the beginning of the book. It’s a shift away from assuming you’re finished when your prayer time ends, and instead, “keeping your heart and spirit expectantly receptive, ready to notice and follow God’s unfolding response and guidance.”



continued on next page...

Breakthrough Prayer continued....

How do I participate in the Dynamite Prayer Initiative?

You can participate with your congregation or small group, or individually. Starting Jan. 14, read one chapter a day for 28 days (each one is just two pages), and then complete the three short prompts on the subsequent page. Pray for God to break through in your life and the life of your congregation in new ways and watch for signs of those breakthroughs.

Each day's entry in the guidebook is divided into five key parts:

- a personal scripture reading that emphasizes God's dynamic power.
- a personal devotional insight about some unique aspect of the Holy Spirit.
- prompts to assist you in cultivating your own honest and authentic reflection, journaling, or discussion with others.
- a short breakthrough prayer to keep your mind and heart aligned and focused God-ward throughout the day (and space for you to craft your own breakthrough prayer).
- a prayer-hold - a short phrase or word from a scripture verse you can use throughout the day, every hour or whenever you become aware that you're feeling inadequate, uncertain, or tempted to slide off track spiritually.

How can we intentionally infuse breakthrough prayer into our congregation throughout the 28 days?

In addition to reading the book, here are additional ideas to consider (remember that a breakthrough prayer can be short—most of those in the book are a single sentence).

- ◇ Ask people to write a breakthrough prayer for your congregation and to submit it to be read aloud in worship or displayed in a highly trafficked area on Sunday.
- ◇ Provide a short breakthrough prayer to your congregation - one from the book or one you develop - and ask people to set their alarms and stop to pray it at a designated time on one or more specific days.
- ◇ Start every church-related meeting by inviting each person present to share a breakthrough prayer that's on their heart.
- ◇ Periodically post a breakthrough prayer - one from the book or one you develop - on your church's social media channel(s), and invite people to pause and pray it when it comes across their feed. (Prior to Jan. 14, we will share a folder with images you can use.)
- ◇ Encourage families to invite each person to share a personal breakthrough prayer daily at a mealtime.
- ◇ Invite church members to share - aloud in worship, through a written submission, at a meeting, and/or via social media - the breakthroughs they are seeing or experiencing as a result of their intentional prayers; lift up and celebrate those breakthroughs.
- ◇ At the end of the 28 days, discuss the impact of the breakthrough prayer initiative, and explore ways you can continue to infuse breakthrough prayer in your congregation or small group, or individually.

Pastor Joyce has asked the Ad Council of both churches to participate in this & has invited some others to join them. If you would like to be a part of this prayer initiative – let her know asap to receive a book!

JANUARY VOLUNTEERS LISTS

January Ushers

Richard & Karen J

Jan	Liturgist	Fellowship
07	Peggy Me	Ivy & Rob M
14	Doris C	Carolann & Don G
21	Augie A	Kelli Ann & Augie A
28	Gary A	Doris C / Rose T

Jan	Liturgist	Ushers
07	Tonya J	Faye & Tonya
14	Bev F	Rick & Margy
21	Bryan G	Brian & Eileen
28	Margy N	Rick & Margy

Jan	Vergas Fellowship
07	Lana J.
14	Connie Z
21	Margy N
28	Bryan & Eileen

If you are unable to be there on a Sunday, please find a substitute to fill in for you. Thank You!

Vergas

Jan 1st Irma S
 Jan 19th Mary D
 Jan 20th Jane W
 Jan 24th Donna S
 Jan 24th Byron Z



Dent

Jan 12th Doris C
 Jan 17th Kevin S
 Jan 24th David S
 Jan 30th Roger D



Heavenly Humor



A Thought for The Day



Let us
WORSHIP
Together

“Worship Times”

Dent UMC

8:30am Pre Fellowship
9am Worship Service

Vergas UMC

9:30am Adult Sunday School (Sep thru May)
10:30am Worship Service
11:30am Coffee Fellowship



Livestream Service begins at 10:30am on the Vergas Facebook page



Recorded Service will be posted on YouTube and dentvergasumc.org

Click on the icon or link to go to the site

Are there things you would like to see each month in your newsletter? Would you like to write an article? Submit photographs? Share a recipe? Please let us know and we will do our best to include it here. Also, If you want your Newsletter delivered by email. Please let Sheri Schoenberger know at sheri.Lschoenberger@gmail.com or call her at 218-329-7465

Additions to the newsletter, **deadline for February, is January 26, 2024.**

We will be sending out the newsletter on the first or second Sunday of each month, if possible. To defray costs the newsletter will be offered in the following formats:

Email - Website - In person pick up at church - 1st or 2nd Sunday of the month.

US Mail - Remaining newsletters will be mailed on the 1st or 2nd Monday of the month.

Church Secretary / Newsletter editor

Sheri Schoenberger

Phone or text: 218-329-7465

email: sheri.lschoenberger@gmail.com

January / February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<u>Worship Times</u> 9am Dent 10:30am Vergas and Livestream	Pastor Joyce Office Hours 2- 3:30pm Tuesdays Dent	Pastor Joyce Office Hours 2 - 3:30pm Thurs. Vergas				
	Irma S. (V) 1	2	3	4	5	6
			9am Dent Breakfast Club @ Mysteries Café			
7	8	9	10	11	Doris C. (D) 12	13
		12:30pm Book Club @ Billy's in Vergas	6pm SPPRC Meeting / Dent	12:30pm Vergas Church Ladies		
14	15	16	Kelvin S. (D) 17	18	Mary D (V) 19	Jane W. (V) 20
			<u>Ad Council</u> 3pm Dent 6:30pm Vergas			
21	22	23	Donna S. (V) 24 Byron Z (V) David S. (D)	25	26	27
28	29	Roger D. (D) 30	31	1	2	3