



The Flame

**Byron United Methodist Church
Byron, MN**

NOVEMBER 2025

FROM THE PASTOR:

As we approach Thanksgiving, I want to share my gratitude for all of you who *are* Byron UMC. You are the church! Through your faith in Christ who is our head and in your love for one another, you are the church by the Holy Spirit who inspires us. I am so grateful to be the church with you, especially because we can trust and rely on one another even in this period of so much divisiveness and dissatisfaction in the world. Thank you, church! I pray that you have the same sense of gratitude for one another.

I am especially grateful for those who lead and serve in roles within the church. Chris Miller, our lay leader, does SO many things that it is impossible to list them all, and she does it all with grace and cheer. Our administrative assistant, Karen Peterson, is incredibly good at her job and makes me look competent even when I'm not. Her husband and our custodian, Jeff, is very reliable at keeping our building clean and in good order. The chairs of our various committees and teams are diligent in their responsibilities and often go above and beyond to make sure that the administration of the church supports the ministry work that we do. Thank you, Terri Nelson (council chair), Al Miller (finance chair), Roger Vick, (trustees chair), Kelly VanDeWalker (education chair), Holly Rolandson (SPRC chair), and Cathy Huntoon (missions representative) for your extraordinary efforts! I am grateful for each of you!

Our counters (Al Miller, Roger Vick, Marty Nelson, Nancy White, Paul Riggs, and Terri Nelson) make sure that every offering gets properly accounted and deposited so that we can pay for all that we do, and our financial secretary, Julie Caulfield, makes sure that every donation is recorded and tracked with gratitude for your gifts. I am grateful for their diligence and for your generosity as donors! Thank you!

The Sunday school teachers and the *Ready, Set, Worship!* team (Kelly VanDeWalker, Jessica Falk, Sara Weis, Dee Dee Hart, Luke Fritze, Holly Rolandson, Chris Miller, Stacey Pappas, and the children and youth of Byron UMC) along with the LIFT – Living in Faith Together team (Julie Caulfield, Sue and Roger Vick, Terry Egbers, and Stacey Pappas) have been providing our church with top-notch worship, fellowship, and study for God's children of all ages. I know that many of you have appreciated these intergenerational services and programs for the growth that they nurture in our young people and for the relationships that we are getting to build with one another across the generations. Thank you, teams and those who have stepped in to help when asked, for your commitment to those ministries!

I'm grateful to Joe Kelley, Chris Miller, and Cheryl DeLeeuw for sharing their musical gifts with us as worship accompanists, and I so appreciate people like Ann Riggs, Terry Egbers, Holly Rolandson, and others who have served as liturgists and lay readers during worship. Larry Nichols faithfully serves as a greeter and sanctuary steward nearly every week. I also have to thank our communion stewards (Cathy Huntoon, Nancy White, Chris Miller, and Aubree, Gauge, and Dee Dee Hart) for preparing and serving the bread and cup at Christ's table each week, as well as Roger Vick, Paul Riggs, Luke Fritze, and Roger Sinning for getting our worship online!

And what about our choir? They are a talented bunch of singers, but I am especially grateful to them for the friendship and fun that we have in our rehearsals. Thank you to Emaleigh and Sara Weis, Holly Rolandson, Terri Nelson, Kelly VanDeWalker, Marlene Abel, Judy Jacobsen, Dee Dee Hart, Chris and Al Miller, Roger Vick, Paul Riggs, and Roger Sinning, as well as to our amazing choir director, Joe Kelley!

Finally, I am grateful for the love, care, and support that you have for one another. Some of you go above and beyond in taking care of your fellow church members like the family that we are.

I know that this letter hasn't named everyone who makes us Byron UMC through their gifts and their service. We are blessed in more ways than can be said. Please know that each and every one of you are appreciated. Thanks be to God, the giver of all good gifts!

Pastor Andy Petter

Advent study with Bishop Lanette: 'A Child is Born'

You're invited to participate in the 2025 Advent Study led by Bishop Lanette. In this study, United Methodists across the Dakotas and Minnesota are invited to read "A Child is Born" by Amy-Jill Levine. Dive into the narratives of Isaac, Ishmael, Moses, and Samuel to reveal how they foreshadow and enrich the timeless Christmas story. Levine shows readers how Scripture's earlier birth stories anticipate the story of Jesus's birth and how His birth resonates and gives new meaning to those earlier stories.

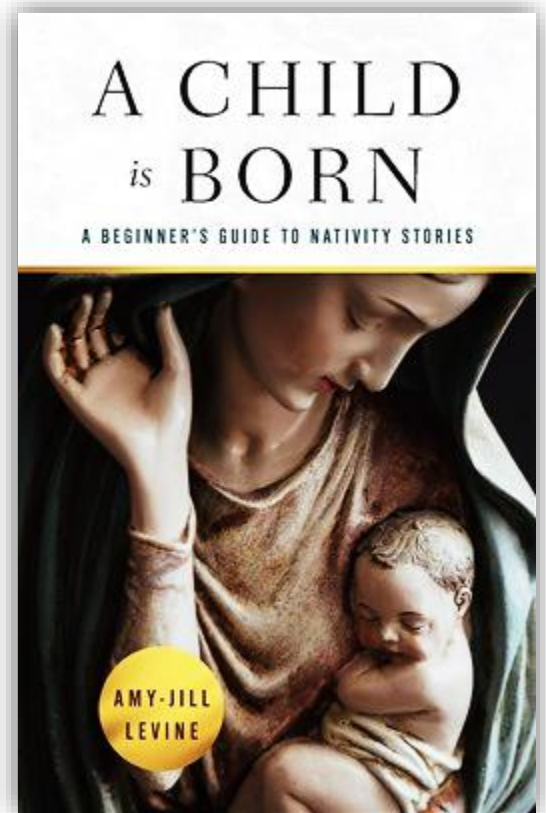
All are welcome! Hundreds of people participate in this study every year, and it is a wonderful time of connection and conversation as we prepare our hearts and minds for Christmas. Mark your calendar and encourage others to join you.

Pastor Andy will host a group at the church for anyone who wants to participate "in-person". If you want to join the study from your own home, follow the registration link below.

Discussions will be held via Zoom on Monday evenings, Dec. 1-22. The schedule is:

- **Dec. 1, 2025**, 7-8:15 p.m. Central—Chapter 1: The Conception and Birth of Isaac and Ishmael
- **Dec. 8, 2025**, 7-8:15 p.m. Central—Chapter 2: The Conception and Birth of Samson
- **Dec. 15, 2025**, 7-8:15 p.m. Central—Chapter 3: The Conception and Birth of Samuel
- **Dec. 22, 2025**, 7-8:15 p.m Central—Chapter 4: Jesus: Heir to Traditions

You must [register](#) in order to receive the Zoom link to each gathering. [Order your books or e-books now.](#)



COVENANT HANDS - Kamisamba Farm: One of the great blessings of our new Covenant Group, which began in March, is its focus on discipleship through acts of devotion, worship, compassion, and justice. From this group came Covenant Hands, a local ministry dedicated to supporting God's people in need.

Currently, we are partnering with United Methodist Global Missionary Lorraine Charinda, who is in ministry at an agricultural training center called Kamisamba Farm in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Through this work, Lorraine is teaching local families how to grow vegetables and fruit, raise animals, and manage a fishery so that they can thrive and enjoy the goodness of life.

The people who depend on Kamisamba Farm now urgently need solar lithium batteries to power the pumps that provide water for both drinking and livestock. As an act of justice, Covenant Hands has made a commitment to raising funds to purchase and install these batteries.

Would you please consider donating to help them in their time of need?

Any amount you can give will help make this possible. Donations can be made through the Byron UMC giving webpage (select Covenant Hands as the purpose) or by check to Byron UMC with "Covenant Hands" written on the memo line.

We will keep everyone updated on our fundraising progress. Thank you for your generosity and prayers!

COMMIT TO A COVENANT GROUP: New covenant small groups will be starting before the end of the year. Make a commitment to join by turning in the commitment card you received at the Covenant Sunday service or by speaking with Pastor Andy.

READY, SET, WORSHIP! and LIFT: The next Ready, Set, Worship! is on **Sunday, November 9th**. Note that we moved this service to the second Sunday of the month. Our new program to follow RSW! Is called LIFT (Living in Faith Together) that replaces the regular Sunday school and coffee fellowship. As with RSW!, LIFT will be for people of all ages. Lunch will be included as part of LIFT as we play together, pray together, study God's word together, and eat together as a church family.



GRIEF GROUP: Our next grief group meeting at Byron UMC is **Wed., Nov. 19th, from 10-11 a.m.** The group offers opportunities to talk about things that cannot be discussed in other settings and to find others who can relate to their situation. The scope of the group is helping others find comfort, healing and relationships through conversations and fellowship with others. For more information, contact Pastor Andy or Marlene Abel.

FINANCE SUMMARY: The following is a summary of the General Fund ending Oct. 31, 2025.

beginning balance Oct. 1, 2025:	\$ 6,291.27
plus Oct. income:	\$ 9,365.80
less Oct. expenses:	\$ 10,751.77
ending balance Oct. 31, 2025:	\$ 4,905.30

APPORTIONMENTS UPDATE: This year, our church's apportionment goal is \$15,407, and as of October 1, 2025 we have contributed \$7,703, (half of the full year amount). To meet our commitment, we are asking every member to prayerfully consider giving an additional gift toward apportionments before December 31, 2025, so we can successfully fulfill this commitment. Every contribution—large or small—makes a real difference. Together, we can meet this goal and demonstrate our shared commitment to God's mission through our wider church. Thank you for your continued generosity, faithfulness, and love. Your giving helps us be the hands and feet of Christ in the world.

CREATION CARE TIPS: "We are part of the land. We think of ourselves as part of our whole environment. Not just the land, but with the animals, the water, the air, everything," explains Charlene Alden, the tribal environmental protection director. "It's what keeps us alive. We have to take care of that and keep that alive so that we can continue living." Charlene is part of the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation which spans 444,000 acres of pines and rivers winding through southeastern Montana.

In the early 1970s the Bureau of Indian Affairs leased roughly half of their reservation lands to coal companies for strip mining without full tribal consent. The tribe has been a model for *perseverance* since that time, petitioning the secretary of interior to cancel coal leases (1973), and going to court in 1976, 1977, 1988, 2016-2022, and 2024 to protect the land and the air from the effects of the only operating coal-fired units in the country without modern pollution controls to filter harmful particulate matter. Particulates are linked to heart and respiratory disease, acidifies lakes and streams, disrupts biodiversity, and depletes soil nutrients. The tribe is in the process of putting up solar panels after receiving training on installation. They are also considering wind energy. Not only are these cleaner energy sources but could also provide jobs more in line with their values and respect for the land.

Taken from *Earthjustice* article written by Molly Hansen, September, 2025. Submitted by Cathy Huntoon.

PRAYERS FOR ONE ANOTHER:

For those who need healing: God of compassion, source of life and health, strengthen, restore, and relieve those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit, especially now: Ruth Wescott (cousin of Janet Sinning), Julie McCoy, Suze Anderson, Karin Byers, Donna Walters, Claire Field, Nancy Kelly, Doris Frey, Treaver Bleichner (grandson of Julene Bleichner), Dick Hart (brother of Judy Luttmers), David Larsen, Calvin Bell, Vicki McIntosh, Paige Reder, Sara (granddaughter of Anita Carlson), Max Smith (son of Barb Smith), Debbie Webb, so that they may receive healing and help in You.

For those who have died: Eternal God, by Your steadfast love, open Your arms of mercy to those who have died, especially now: Sandy Fitzpatrick; Wayne Petersen (friend of Julene Bleichner); Loren Walters; Jared White; Jim Miller (brother of Suze Anderson); Kirsten Hart (mother of Aubree, Gauge and Hunter); Patricia Klingsporn, Debbie Schwartz (sister of Kathy Nerlien); Dan McCollough; Russ Wright; Anita Nelsen; Rev. Deanna Woodward (daughter of the late Ken and Lennis Sigrist); Greg Rud; Dawn Bidwell; Jean Franklin (mother of Rev. Sharon Nelson); Loyola Shappell; William 'Dirk' Dehn; Ron Fogelson; that they may find their place with You.

For those who mourn: Gracious God, whose Son knew our sorrows, our tears, and our death, look with compassion on those who grieve, especially now: the family of Sandy Fitzpatrick; the family of Wayne Petersen; the family of Loren Walters; the family of Jared White; the family of Jim Miller; the family of Kirsten Hart; the family of Patricia Klingsporn; the family of Debbie Schwartz; the family of Dan McCollough; the family of Russ Wright; the family of Anita Nelsen; the family of Rev. Deanna Woodward; the family of Greg Rud; the family of Dawn Bidwell; the family of Jean Franklin; the family of Loyola Shappell; the family of William 'Dirk' Dehn; the family of Ron Fogelson; and all their friends who mourn with them, so that they may be comforted by Your sure presence and filled with hope in Your goodness.

For the homebound, those in care facilities, and their caregivers: God of all seasons of life, bring comfort to those who are vulnerable, tired, or weak, especially now: Suze Anderson, David Larsen, Nancy Kelly, Bette Josephson, Calvin Bell, Donna Walters, Alan Bourquin, Debbie Byers, John Lloyd, Carol Ramthun, Barb Smith; so that they may be blessed and at peace each day. Inspire and encourage those who care for them, so that their work may be filled with grace and their love may be multiplied.

For those who celebrate: God of blessing, we praise You for the joy we have received and the gift we have in one another. We lift up special thanks for those who celebrate milestones in life – birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, the birth of a child, graduations, promotions, and new jobs – and we ask Your continued blessing upon them, now and always.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

If you or someone you know would like to be included in these prayers, please contact Pastor Andy directly at 210-288-9477 or Andrew.L.Petter@gmail.com.

BEARPACK PROGRAM: Byron UMC continues its pledge to give \$200 monthly (Sept. – May) toward the BearPack Program with Byron Schools. This program helps those families with children in need in our schools. *All donations at coffee fellowship time go toward this fund.* Please consider supporting this great need in our community by giving generously to the cookie jar each week!

SUNDAY SCHOOL 2025-2026: We have classes for pre-K to 1st grade, 2nd to 3rd grade, 4th to 6th grade, and youth. All are welcome! If you have any questions or would be interested in helping with Sunday school, please speak with Kelly VanDeWalker.

WOMEN'S SHELTER AND SUPPORT CENTER: Byron UMC's ongoing mission is support for the Womens' Shelter and Support Center. They also shelter men and their families (pets are welcome too) that need to get out of an abusive situation as well. Once they have a safe place to live they need to set up house and we can help by donating items to the shelter for them. There is a receptacle in the narthex for your donations. You aren't obligated to donate expensive items or donate at all. Help if you can. Here is a list of needed items:

School supplies: Scissors, Folders plastic (Red, Blue, Yellow and Green), Crayons, Colored pencils, Highlighters, Markers, Pencils (sharpened preferred), Erasers, Glue (bottles and sticks).

Gift Cards - Visa, Target, Walmart, Hy-Vee, Kwik Trip (Gas, Food, Supplies, Car Repairs, etc.)

Kids Activities gift cards i.e. Movie passes, Bowling, Bounce House, Dairy Queen, McDonalds, Pizza places, Arcade, etc.

Adult color/activity books & colored pencils

Non-Perishable Food / Snacks (individual packets, i.e. Potato chips, granola bars, fruit bars, pretzel bits, raisins, fruit packets, animal crackers, and microwave popcorn

Baby wipes, Pull-ups (size 3-4T, 5-6T).

Paper products (toilet paper, napkins, tissues); **Cleaning Supplies** (dish soap, toilet bowl cleaner, disinfectant spray)

Eco-friendly plates, bowls (microwaveable) **cutlery.**

Kitchen Utensils (spatulas, whisks, wooden spoons, measuring cups/spoons, peelers, graters, cutting boards, knife sets, ladles, can openers, kitchen scissors, baking sheets, pot holders)

New Pots & Pans, Small Appliances (Coffee pots, mixers, can openers, etc.)

New Pillows, New Bath Towels, New Twin Sheet sets, Women's PJ's - all sizes

New Laptops & Tablets, New Tracphones

Shampoo and conditioner (full-sized)

If you have something you think they could use not on the list, please contact Janet Sinning at jsinning@charter.net or 507-251-1657.

ONLINE GIVING: Offerings can be made using electronic fund transfers from your bank account or by credit/debit card and have the option to be set as a recurring gift.

Please go to <https://byronmn.umcchurches.org/giving> which takes you to the giving page or scan this QR code with your smartphone. Once there, follow the instructions for registration.



USE FULL CHURCH ADDRESS FOR MAILING: When sending mail to the church, please be sure to include the P.O. Box 146 in the address. The post office has been returning mail to senders when the PO Box # is not included. Please use 503 1st Ave. NW, PO Box 146, Byron, MN 55920.

CHURCH CONTACTS:

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