



The Flame

Byron United Methodist Church
Byron, MN

DECEMBER 2025

FROM THE PASTOR:

The season of Advent started this past Sunday. It was a cold and snowy morning, so I know that many of you stayed off the roads and watched from home – it was a day to be grateful for our livestream and for the people who make it happen.

Advent is the season of hoping, preparing, and waiting for the coming of the kingdom of God (on earth as it is in heaven, as Jesus put it). As we prepare for Christ to come, we shape our lives in his image by loving God with everything we are and by loving our neighbors as ourselves. As United Methodists, we do this through worship and devotion (acts of loving God) and justice and compassion (acts of loving our neighbors).

I invite you to participate in an act of justice through the Advent Calendar Food+ Drive. Mark off each day of Advent by collecting the specified food or hygiene item as a donation for the Byron Community Ed Food Pantry. A digital copy was sent out by email last week, and you can pick up a printed copy at the church.

Each day of the calendar also includes a devotional reading to help you grow your love of God. Bring your collected items to the church each Sunday and place them under the tree in the sanctuary before or after worship. Just by taking part in the Advent Calendar Food+ Drive, you will have done 3 out of 4 acts of discipleship every week!

Please take note of another upcoming way to love our neighbors (far-off neighbors, but still our neighbors) with the Covenant Hands Soup Fundraiser for Kamisamba Farms – more information can be found below in this newsletter.

Advent ends with Christmas Eve, when we celebrate the light of Jesus Christ and the joy of his birth – good news for all the world! I hope and pray that we will see under the tree a collection of food for our neighbors in need that will reflect God's great love for us!

Our ***Christmas Eve Candlelight worship service will be at 4:30 p.m.***, but I encourage you to show up a little early this year. The choir has been working hard under Joe's direction to prepare a mini-cantata as a prelude that will begin at 4:15 p.m.

May Christmas Day find you filled with hope, peace, joy, and love, ready for the coming of the kingdom of God!

Pastor Andy Petter

SOUP FUNDRAISER - HELP BRING WATER TO KAMISAMBA FARM: The Byron UMC Covenant Hands group will be selling homemade soup (quarts) on ***Sunday, December 7 from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.*** Freewill offering. **Soup can be pre-ordered (sign-up sheet in dining room or call Chris Miller at 507 269-6413).** Soup choices: Chicken Noodle, Chili, & Vegetable Beef. All proceeds go toward solar lithium batteries needed to pump water for children, crops, and families at Kamisamba Farm in the Congo. Our UMC global missionary Lorraine Chandra leads the work at this farm. Learn more about the farm at: www.covenanthand.org. Donations for Kamisamba Farm 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.

ADVENT CALENDAR FOOD+ DRIVE 2025: We once again are collecting donations of food and toiletries for the Byron Food Pantry through the Advent Calendar Food+ Drive. If you haven't already, take an Advent Calendar from the entryway or from the email attachment sent out about the food+ drive and follow the instructions as we count down the days to Christmas with a daily dose of generosity.

READY, SET, WORSHIP! and LIFT: Our next *Ready, Set, Worship! and LIFT* (*Living in Faith Together*) session is on **Sunday, December 14th**. The children and youth will offer a special Christmas program during RSW!, and *LIFT* will be a holiday celebration for the entire church family. If you haven't been able to take part in *LIFT* yet, this will be a great day to be there!



APPORTIONMENTS UPDATE: This year, our church's apportionment goal is \$15,407, and as of November 30, 2025 we have contributed \$11,555, (remaining balance of \$3,852). 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.

GRIEF GROUP: Our next grief group meeting at Byron UMC is **Wed., Dec. 10th, 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 Nov. 30, 2025.

beginning balance Nov. 1, 2025:	\$ 4,975.30
plus Nov. income:	\$ 17,964.05
plus Nov. transfer from savings	\$ 627.10
less Nov. expenses:	\$ 12,494.08
ending balance Nov. 30, 2025:	\$ 11,072.37

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.

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!

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.

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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