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August 2025 - Here and Now Newsletter!

Volume 72, Issue 8

PASTOR LEANNE'S MESSAGE:

Talking About It

“North Dakota Nice” is, in fact, truly authentically *nice*. People chat in a friendly way when one stands in line at a store; neighbors really do bring one cookies when one moves to a new house. If one is stranded on a roadside, someone will stop to help; a perfect stranger will return one’s lost billfold right to one’s door. These are my experiences of “North Dakota Nice” – one can’t say better than that.

But, there is one thing about “North Dakota Nice” that has the potential to backfire on a person: I suppose because of our frontiersperson legacy, North Dakotans are wed to a rugged individualism that is loath to ask for help. We are too kind to burden one another with our problems; we are private people. Many times, we keep our troubles and struggle to ourselves. We would be ashamed to have anyone know that our lives are less than perfect, or that we are less than strong.

When I encounter this in the church, I am always taken a little back, even now. The tradition in which I was raised always had “testimony time” every Sunday evening... an opportunity for individuals in the church to stand up before the congregation and share what God was doing in their lives. Often that meant talking about what they were experiencing – and what God was teaching them through heart attacks, family struggles, financial crises, and one time, yes, what an elderly woman in our church learned when her lawn man accidentally ran his mower through a bunny’s nest. My point is – we knew each other. We knew what hurt, who was angry at a sibling or child, who was scared about the future and who was lonely and feeling left out. There was (and is) never any shame in this – this is the nature of church, and we are most healthy when we know each other well so we can love each other efficiently.

I hope by now you know this one thing about me: I am pretty open, and love to be around pretty open people. Once in a while, someone will tell me, “you’re going through so much yourself, and I didn’t want to burden you,” →

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PASTOR'S MESSAGE CONTINUED:

but that isn't how this works for me. I WANT to know, I value the sharing, human openness and vulnerability helps me accept my own and other people's stories inspire me to be strong. This is how God works in our lives, through the church. Love is produced in the honest sharing of our life stories.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ," the Apostle Paul said, and that law of Christ is love. So, let's talk about it. Let us tell each other the stories of how we are walking with Christ through good and bad. In this way, we can do each other a world of good.

Leanne

SAVE THE DATE

The Banquet

Thursday, October 9, 2025 4:00pm

The Dream Center



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES:

- Sept. 3: Noon-Munch & Mingle at Red Lobster (tentative)**
- Sept. 7: 9-10am & 11-12pm Blood Pressure Clinic**
- Sept. 9: 11am Strength & Balance Class resumes**
- Sept. 10: 5:45pm PAC/Teens resumes**
- Sept. 14: Back to School Sunday**
- Sept. 21: 3rd graders receive Bibles**
- Sept. 28: All Staff Appreciation Sunday**

Collecting plastic grocery bags for a good cause!

Our Hospitality Committee is collecting used plastic grocery bags for a project to make mats to give to homeless people. The bags must NOT have any holes. The committee is working with a woman who creates the mats, like the one pictured here, by hand-weaving the plastic bags. It takes about 500 bags to make one mat. The committee decided to test whether the congregation would support this effort, hoping this could be a long-term outreach (and environmentally friendly) project for our congregation. The mats will be given to groups who work with the homeless in our area!



PARISH NURSE NEWS -

Recently the Bismarck Veterans Public Library has added radon detection kits to their list of items that can be checked out courtesy of the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences. I decided to try this out in hopes to help others realize what a benefit this is.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas. It is colorless and odorless. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer. It can get into homes from cracks in the foundation, groundwater and soil. North Dakota has radon levels that are amongst the highest in the United States. It is estimated that 2 of every 3 homes in North Dakota EXCEED the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's recommended level for radon.

The test was about the size of a cell phone and came with very simple instructions for how to use the radon detector, and how to proceed if your levels come back greater than 4. I have included a picture of the test and instructions, and encourage you to check it out from the library! It's very easy to use and very beneficial to test your home!

Reminder I will be out of the office from July 24th through August 6th.

<https://www.epa.gov/radon>



"Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord,
'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust.'"

Psalm 91:1-2

Sincerely, Carmen

CHILDCARE CENTER SAD NEWS:

The quiet you “hear” in the north hallways of First Presbyterian is the absence of little voices in the childcare center. On July 23, 2025 the center stopped its operation and was put on pause to determine its future. Since 2020, it has become increasingly difficult to hire and keep qualified staff members. With the retirement of Shawn Stettner the director, and the departure of the assistant director Vanessa Hein to pursue other career possibilities, the board was challenged with filling those positions within a small window of time.

It's with great disappointment to state that the challenge proved impossible to complete. The center has had a 30 - year run; 30 years of serving families while caring for their children. In June of 1995, Shawn Stettner was hired as director to begin the work of preparing to ready the First Presbyterian Child Care Center for operation. The Child Care Center was created as part of the church's outreach and mission work, serving families while caring for their children, specifically infants. The center was officially opened on August 1, 1995.

In anticipation of celebrating the 30 years of presence, photo displays have been created, photo albums organized, Christmas Cards and letters from families have been reviewed along with the many thank you notes and letters from parents.

The thank you notes reflect the parents and extended family members need to express their deep gratitude to the staff members who were providing care for the most precious possessions in their lives, their children.

The following are a couple of those notes of deep thanks:

“Saying thank you seems not enough when the deed I thank you for is none other than caring so beautifully for our children. Wyatt and Ryder have thrived at First Presbyterian Child Care and it has meant the world to us. Thank you for your centered and wonderfully flexible presence and all you do every day.

Your work is the most important work there is.” *The Piehls*

“I (also) wanted to thank you and your staff for the excellent care you provided for Grace while we were in North Dakota. Since we have visited several daycares in Atlanta and have yet to find a center as clean, well organized and caring as yours. Your staff provide loving care for the children. They are there because they love kids and unfortunately I can't say it's the same in other places. I appreciate how much you and your staff work to provide the personal touch and think you excel at it.

We had a wonderful experience while Grace was under your care. We dearly miss the friendly atmosphere and expertise. Good childcare is hard to find; we were fortunate to have Grace so well taken care of as it made our lives easier and less stressful.

Thank you so much for your tremendous work!” *Kirsten Carlson*



“P.S. Please feel free to share my appreciation with members of the congregation. I know their support is vital to your center & your center deserves their full support!”

There are many, many other notes that reflect the same sentiment. Truly our families appreciated the care and the feeling of being able to leave their children in others’ care with no worries.

The current Childcare Board of Directors offers their deepest gratitude for the support by the congregation members which has come in so many forms: painting the classrooms, volunteering in the classrooms, washing dishes, donating supplies, donating books, assisting with the “Breakfast with Santa” event, participating in Halloween Trick or Treating, providing Christmas gifts for center families by taking an ornament from the Tree of Love, donating support in the form of memorials, and financial support for staff meals. The itemized list is very long and has been much appreciated!

It takes a village as the saying states and our congregation members have been that village.

We have had a good run!



These items from the Childcare Center pantry, were donated to Heaven’s Helpers Soup Café!

Heaven’s Helpers
Soup Cafe



CHRISTIAN ED:

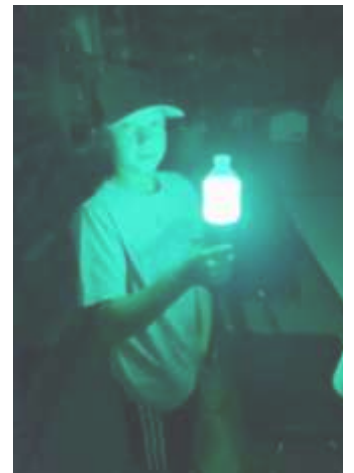
Thank you for stopping by to check in on the kids and teens! In July we had Vacation Bible School! There was lots of fun & laughter as we learned about Alaska and to “Trust In Jesus!” Keep an eye out for pictures from the trip to Triennium in Kentucky, coming in the next newsletter!

Youth Ministry Director, Mark Jensen

**VBS
2025**



We can glow!



Special thanks to all our volunteers who always come through and make VBS a fantastic experience!!

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE:

The Zadorozhnia family from Ukraine arrived on schedule June 30th and are completely settled in their apartment. Vira (mother), Veronika (medical student) and Yeva (8th grader) have bicycles and are managing to get to the grocery store and around town. Global Neighbors is assisting the family with appointments and applications for green cards and social security numbers. They have library cards and are making good use of the services there.

The family was able to attend the 4th of July parade in Mandan and took in the 4th of July celebration at the BSC Bowl as well. They also attended a Larks' baseball game, so they are getting to know the community and the culture of Bismarck.

Things still on the agenda are a trip to Fargo to meet with immigration services for photos and paper work, a tour of Wachter school for Yeva, and getting jobs for Vira and Veronika.

The generosity of this congregation as well as that of the United Church of Christ, Unitarian Universalist Church and Lutheran Church of the Cross has helped the Zadorozhnyas settle into our community and feel welcomed. Thank you for your donations that helped set up their kitchen.



FPC Church Garden report:

Our Church garden continues to thrive despite the storms in July. Although the early crops have been plowed under, the late summer crops are producing well. Look for more beets and onions in the produce cart at church along with fresh beans, squash, zucchini and cucumbers. As in the past, produce from your garden is also welcome on Sunday mornings. We have a bumper crop of raspberries this year, so stop by and grab a handful!



Supporting the AARC

The Hospitality Committee donation opportunity in August is a request for personal hygiene products for the Abused Adult Resource Center (AARC) of Bismarck.

The Abused Adult Resource Center (AARC) has been helping survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault for more than 40 years. Serving south central North Dakota, they provide emergency support, crisis intervention, temporary shelter, food, counseling, and advocacy to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking in a non-discriminatory way.

AARC provides all their services to survivors free of charge. Personal gifts are essential to meeting these needs! None of their funding is secure, so they depend on community support to continue as a vital service in our community. This is our congregation's chance to provide some of that support. Donations can be placed in the donation box in the narthex.



Brag Box:

2 new great-granddaughters of Joanne Pearson!

I am pleased to brag about my two new great granddaughters. Elara Memarian Geston was born April 30, 2025. She is the daughter of my grandson, Andrew Geston and his wife Shadi.

My second blessing is great granddaughter Lilah Violet Pearson born June 4, 2025. She is the daughter of my grandson, Bennett Pearson and his wife Kaatrin.



Lilah Pearson



Elara Geston



BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES



AUGUST 2025 - BIRTHDAYS

August 2	Brant Boeckel
August 2	Kim Wassim
August 4	Kim Christianson
August 6	Matthew Skaret
August 7	Enid Thompson
August 8	Joanne Pearson
August 8	Ashlee Fox
August 10	Tamera Hellman
August 12	Dale Hoerauf
August 13	Beckett Hedland
August 14	Ruth Jensen
August 16	Lael Hoerauf
August 18	Amy Kinnischtzke
August 21	Connor Hellman
August 22	Kenley Gratz
August 23	Winston Satran
August 24	Bryan Skager
August 25	Sandra Cofell
August 26	Jerry Wilson
August 27	TJ Ball
August 27	Evelynn Bitz
August 30	Jessica Feist
August 31	Cole Svihovec

AUGUST 2025 - ANNIVERSARIES

August 10	Winston & Barb Satran
August 16	Dennis & Becky Rosenkranz
August 16	Joe & Katherine Satrom
August 17	Darin & Karmen Svihovec
August 19	Larry & Peggy Hoge
August 21	Rick & Lori Lee
August 29	Mark & Sandra Ohlhauser



Munch & Mingle!
Lucky's 13 Pub (915 S 3rd St.)
Noon - Lucky's 13 Pub
3rd & Expressway
Wednesday, August 6, 2025!



Please let us know if we've
made a mistake, omission
or if you would prefer
not to have your special
day published.
~ Thank you ~

First Presbyterian Church

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www.fpcbismarck.com

Sunday Worship: 10:00 am

Office Hours: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm



Pastor

Rev. Dr. Leanne Simmons

Finance Assistant

Carol Thompson

Administrative Assistant

Maureen Chrest

Parish Nurse

Carmen Bryhn

Maintenance

Erik Hein Sr

Christian Ed. Youth Director

Mark Jensen

Organists

Arvy Smith & Gail Snustad

Chancel Choir Director

Debi Rogers

Westminster Chimes Director

Lael Hoerauf

Audio/Visual Specialist

Josh Stokka

Membership Services

Judy Lentz

Nursery

Mary Jones & Laci Rauser

Sunday Security

Erik Hein Jr

Christian Ed. Interns

Ruth Jensen & Connor Svihovec

HELLO

August 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
	Parish Nurse Carmen on vacation July 24 - August 6					
3 10am Worship communion 8th Sunday of Pentecost	4 1:30pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:30pm Scouts 7:00pm Christian Ed	5 5:30pm AA meeting (room #201) 5:45pm Prop.& Equipment NO Lay Pastors	6 Noon - Munch & Mingle! Lucky's 13 Pub 3rd & Expressway	7 2:00pm Yoga	8	9
10 10am Worship 9th Sunday of Pentecost	11 5:30pm Worship & Music 6:30pm Scouts	12 5:30pm CCC Board 5:30pm AA meeting (#201)	13	14 2:00pm Yoga 6:00pm Hospitality	15	16
17 10th Sunday of Pentecost	18 Noon -Resource Management 1:30pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 4:30pm Admin. & Personnel 6:30pm Scouts	19 5:30pm AA meeting (#201)	20	21 2:00pm Yoga 7:00pm Deacons	22	23
24 10am Worship 11th Sunday of Pentecost 31 10am Worship 12th Sunday of Pentecost	25 6:30pm Scouts	26 2:00pm Presby Friends 5:30pm AA meeting (#201) 6:00pm Session	27	28 2:00pm Yoga	29	30