

ELY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

"The Little Church With the Big Heart"

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Parish News

December 29, 2023

"This and That" - Passing along Several Items

First, I am grateful for each of you in whatever way you participated in our Advent and Christmas worship services, whether in planning, providing music, being a liturgist, lighting the Advent candles, ushering, or worshipping alongside the rest of the congregation. I experienced the worship services as vibrant moments of expectation for Jesus' birth and joyous celebration on Christmas Eve. Thank you.

The Christmas Eve service itself was especially full of meaning and wonder for me. Three notes:

One, the reason I tell the Christmas Story from memory each year is a New Testament professor of mine in seminary emphasized that the four Gospel accounts of Jesus' life were first told in oral form long before they were written down, so this is how they were experienced by the earliest Christians. His research (specifically on the Gospel of Mark) suggests the Gospels' very structure facilitates memorization.

Two, some of you may have noticed I took several pictures while we were singing Silent Night. I did so despite having mixed emotions. I don't think it's appropriate to take pictures during a worship service in general, but I did want to have another reminder how much the Ely United Methodist Church means to me. I did pass them along to my family, but won't share them in any additional way.

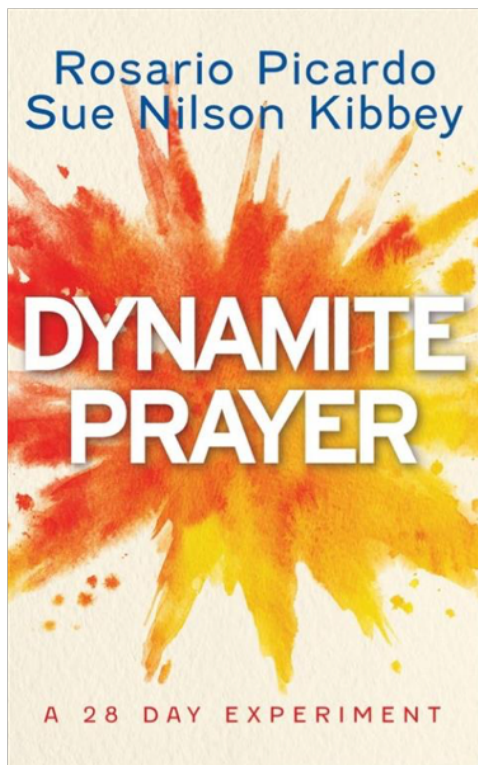
Three, a huge thank you from the bottom of my heart for each and every Christmas greeting you extended to me. Your personal greetings and best wishes, your Christmas cards, and the gift from the congregation.

Second, our church had a productive annual Church Conference on Thursday, December 21st. My State of the Church report is included in this edition of Parish News. Watch for the official minutes, which will be included in a later edition. A digital copy of the entire Church Conference report is available in pdf format by request to the email address on the masthead of this newsletter.

Third, the planning is in full swing for the transition in pastoral leadership following my retirement in June.

1. My final Sunday is June 16th. The Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) will be working with the Ad Council to put together a retirement party following the service. Watch for more details.
2. Our PPRC worked carefully to compile a detailed profile, describing our congregation, the Ely community, and what we value in a pastor. District Superintendent Laurie Kantonen met with the committee following worship on Sunday, November 5th to carefully listen to our church's hopes. She also communicated the process between now and when she will bring up the Cabinet's choice for our next pastor to an introductory meeting. She thinks this will be sometime in February.
3. Members from our PPRC and Trustees inspected the parsonage to look over its condition and to make plans for any improvements before the next pastor arrives.
4. Our Ad Council, other Committees, and I am working carefully to have our congregational soil well prepared for the next pastor when he or she arrives.

As always, I'm grateful to God, the Ely United Methodist Church, and each of you as 2023 ends and 2024 begins. May the Lord bless you and keep you in all things. Pastor Craig



**Dynamite Prayer Initiative
January 14 – February 10.**

We invite you to join us for a breakthrough prayer movement across the Dakotas-Minnesota Episcopal Area from January 14 - February 10.

Dynamite Prayer is a 28-day devotional guidebook by Rev. Dr. Rosario Picardo and Rev. Sue Nilson Kibbey. 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.

"All around us, we see and experience division, anger, violence, and polarization," said Rev. Dan Bader, superintendent for the Dakotas Conference's Southwest District. "If we are going to respond with the heart of Jesus, a heart of grace and love, in ways that address the needs, the hurt, the

brokenness, then we need to lean deeply into the heart of God. That is done as we commit ourselves to prayer."

"This is an important moment for us in the Dakotas-Minnesota Area to do something that's grounded in our deeply shared connection and beliefs," said Rev. Michelle Hargrave. "Doing a prayer initiative together can connect us across theological differences, urban and rural settings—all the things that might still divide us."

We, the Ely United Methodist Church, is taking part in this exciting initiative. We invite our entire church family to participate. The Dynamite Prayer book will be handed out to everyone in our congregation prior to January 14. If you live outside the Ely area, you will be receiving your book in the mail! If you are not a member and would like to receive a copy, please let us know by contacting Sheri Rue, sherirue007@gmail.com, or text 507-456-2499.

Are you ready to see what God can do when we come together in prayer and ask God's Spirit to unleash in us? Join us and let's find out!

Ely United Methodist Church
Church Conference 2023
December 21, 2023

State of the Church
Pastor Craig Haberman

I offer these thoughts on where our congregation finds itself as my brief time as your pastor draws to a close. I share these perceptions along with my gratitude to our church and my love for each of you.

I'm using the words stability, renewal, and change to summarize this season of our life together.

- *Stability:* Our church is a remarkably stable expression of the Body of Christ. We are made up of a large number of able and committed individuals, eager to do that which God is placing before us. This includes people in official leadership positions and others carrying out the astonishing number of tasks necessary to bring life to the administrative, educational, worship, and outreach ministries of our church. These individuals and our history of working together brought us through the upheaval of the pandemic in a way where our church "looks pretty much the same" to me as before the pandemic arrived in March of 2020.
- *Renewal:* We are also in a season of renewal, which in my estimation began sometime during the summer of 2023. We have a healthy turnover in our leadership, with an above-average number of people assuming new positions in significant leadership posts. Past leaders remain part of our leadership team in other positions, bringing important experience and continuity. We've also had Spirit-led spiritual growth in our children's Sunday School and adult study ("*Journeys with the Messiah*" and two women's studies – Lent: "*Bitter and Sweet*" and Advent: "*Shadow and Light*"). We have upcoming Rule of Christ training in January 2024. We've always been a praying congregation; it seems even more evident now.
- *Change:* The arrival of our new pastor in June of 2024 will be the most visible change in our congregation. He or she will be different from who I am, that's one of two things I know for certain. The other? That our church is well-equipped to work through this transition with him or her in the same manner as when Pastor Dana Thompson retired after 31 years and I arrived in August of 2018. I will be available in every way that is helpful in assisting the new pastor through this transition.

Pastors come and pastors go, but Ely United Methodist Church remains the "Little Church with the Big Heart." And furthermore, the church, is what the Risen Christ chose 2000 years ago to be his body in world, something it will continue to be, as he has promised.

I am grateful to have been one of your pastors. And am grateful that Ely United Methodist Church was the final of nine churches I served over the period of 42 years.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Craig Haberman

The Ely United Methodist Church

Prayer Wall

December 29, 2023

This is a guide for prayer this week. The *Prayer Wall* is a reminder of those needing prayers during devotional times. Thank you for dedicating some of your personal prayer time to lift up these requests.

Isaiah 40: 28 (NIV)

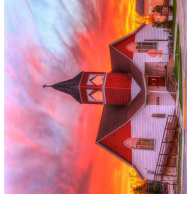


“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God... He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.”

We lift up the following in prayer...

- **Darren Masier** – Kathy Brandau’s cousin, Darren, is in critical condition with leukemia. He had a bone marrow transplant recently, but has developed liver and kidney failure issues. He has been intubated with hopes of his body resting and accepting the necessary medicines. Pray for a healing miracle and for his family.
- **Will** – Pastor Craig asked for prayers for his niece’s husband, Will, who had a heart attack. Pray for recovery.
- **Linda Keck** – **Update: Margie Olson reported Linda had surgery to reroute her carotid artery. Pray for recovery.** Margie Olson asked for prayers for her friend, Linda Keck, who suffered a stroke.
- **Carolynn** – Don Ingerson’s ex-wife, Carolynn, is in the hospital after having a heart attack. Pray for recovery.
- **Jody & his son, John** – Jer Niskala asked to keep Jody in your prayers who is dealing with cancer and his son, John, who is in later stages of MS.
- **Eleanor** – Eleanor, a 6 year old, is diagnosed with a brain tumor on her pituitary. Surgery relieved pressure and provided a biopsy. Pray the biopsy is not cancer or spreading. Pray also for Eleanor’s mother & father and siblings, Jolene, Scott, Finley & Rhett. Eleanor’s family is friends with the Devon Luthens family.
- **Wes Weisinger family & friends** – **Update: Wes passed away.** Pray for comfort and peace for his family and friends, especially his mother Barb and his aunt Vicki Wagner.
- **Mary Ellen Skeesick** – Linda Hane asked for prayers for her sister, Mary Ellen, who was recently diagnosed with breast cancer.
- **Steff Hyink** – Lucy Diesslin asked for prayers for her friend, Steff Hyink, in the loss of her sister, Barb.
- **Jeff** – Sheri Rue asked for prayers for her brother, Jeff, who is now going through a divorce.
- **Emma** – Trish Sheffler asked for prayer of healing for Emma who just had back surgery.
- **Dave** – Lisa Porthan asked for prayers for her father, Dave, whose Parkinson’s is advancing and her mother who is handling Dave’s care.
- **Loren** – Lucy Diesslin’s brother, Loren, has been placed on hospice comfort care. Pray for his comfort.
- **Shane** – Pray for successful treatments for Zach & Jacob Rue’s friend who has begun chemo for his cancer.
- **Rod Loe’s family and friends** – Rod passed away on the morning of Tuesday, December 5. Services will be held at Ely UMC on December 15 at 11:00 AM.
- **Jim Gift** – **Update: His surgery went well and he is back home.** Lucy Diesslin asked for prayers for their nephew, Jim Gift, who has been diagnosed with sarcoma carcinoma on the roof of his mouth.
- **The Russia / Ukraine conflict • Political Unrest in Africa • The People of Israel & Those Involved in the Current Conflict** – Pray for a world-wide lasting resolution, safety of the people, and peace.

We include all the United Methodist Churches and Pastors, both active and retired, in our MN UMC Annual Conference as we work in extraordinary ways to keep our congregations and communities free from infection by the COVID-19 virus.



January 2024

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

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| | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |
| <p>7</p> <p>10:00 AM Worship Service and Sunday School <i>Holy Communion</i></p> | <p>8</p> <p>7:00 AM Pasties Veggie Prep 1:00 PM Dough Ball Prep</p> | <p>9</p> <p>7:00 AM Pasties Production & Sales</p> | <p>10</p> <p>10:00 AM • Ely Ministerial Association 5:00 PM • Special Connections Committee Meeting with Ad Council</p> | <p>11</p> <p>6:00 PM Choir Practice</p> | <p>12</p> <p>6:00 PM Choir Practice</p> | <p>13</p> |
| <p>14</p> <p>10:00 AM Worship Service and Sunday School</p> | <p>15</p> <p>7:00 AM Pasties Veggie Prep 1:00 PM Dough Ball Prep</p> | <p>16</p> <p>7:00 AM Pasties Production & Sales</p> | <p>17</p> <p>10:00 AM United Methodist Women</p> | <p>18</p> <p>6:00 PM Choir Practice 7:00 PM Ad Council Meeting</p> | <p>19</p> | <p>20</p> |
| <p>21</p> <p>10:00 AM Worship Service and Sunday School</p> | <p>22</p> | <p>23</p> | <p>24</p> | <p>25</p> <p>6:00 PM Choir Practice</p> | <p>26</p> | <p>27</p> |
| <p>28</p> <p>10:00 AM Worship Service & Sunday School 11:00 AM Light Luncheon 11:30 AM • Rule of Christ (entire congregation) 1:30 PM • Rule of Christ PPRC & Ad Council</p> | <p>29</p> | <p>30</p> | <p>31</p> | | | |