



The Flame

Byron United Methodist Church
Byron, MN

Who we are –
we are a welcoming church
that wants everyone to know God's love.

MAY 2026

FROM THE PASTOR:

On my first Sunday at Byron UMC back in July 2022, I shared with you my personal ministry motto: Stir the Pot. For me, stirring the pot is the work of keeping the church “cooking” in its mission by gently moving us and mixing things up. Stirring the pot keeps us from becoming stale, complacent, cold, or divided in our ministry. Stirring the pot aims to keep everyone actively engaged and involved in discipleship.

Now, it's my pot that's being stirred! As you probably have heard, Bishop Lanette intends to appoint me to Grace United Methodist Church in Paynesville starting July 1st. This is not a move I asked for, but it's a move I have been always ready for since I was ordained as an elder in 2020. It's part of my covenant and commitment to God and the church.

For me, this means leaving a church full of people I love to enter a church full of people I haven't met. I'm leaving behind certain ways of doing things to learn new ways. And I finally know how to get around Rochester after four years but now I will need to figure out where everything is in St Cloud!

Of course, Byron UMC is being stirred as I move on and you welcome a new pastor who will bring their own gifts, ideas, and priorities. I know – change is hard! However, I know that change can be good when God is involved. It was good for me when I came here, and I have been incredibly blessed to be with you for the last four years. I am confident that you will be a blessing for the next pastor to come.

When we proclaim faith in Jesus, it's more than just a statement of belief. Faith is a commitment to trust God's plan for us, an attentiveness to the stirrings of the Holy Spirit that reveal this plan, and a willingness to respond by putting the plan into action, even when it requires us to do what is uncomfortable, to go to unfamiliar and unwelcoming places, or to love those whom we don't yet know. That's not just the faith of a pastor. It's the faith to which every United Methodist is called.

I will remain appointed at Byron UMC as your pastor through June, but my last Sunday will be June 14th. After that, I will be at the annual conference meeting in St Cloud, followed by church camp at Northern Pines.

If you have any questions about what is happening with the appointment of a new pastor for Byron UMC, you can reach out to Holly Rolandson (Staff-Parish Relations Committee Chair) or another member of the SPRC (Chris Miller, Elissa Strunk, Dee Dee Hart, Mike Brooks, and Roger Parker).

Pastor Andy Petter

BAKE SALE FUNDRAISER - Sunday, May 17th: The church youth are asking for your help with their upcoming bake sale fundraiser for summer church camp. Please consider making a donation of baked goods for the sale. We request that potential allergens be labeled. Please speak with Emaleigh Weis for more details. Baked goods will be available for sale after worship and at the choir concert in the afternoon. Thank you so much for your support!

FINANCE SUMMARY: The following summarizes BUMC financial funds ending March 31, 2026.

Balance Sheet Roll Forward Report					
03-01-2026 to 03-31-2026					
Funds					
Name	Starting	Increase	Decrease	Balance	
General	\$10,104.58	\$10,996.00	\$16,572.04	\$4,528.54	\$2,500 Designated, remainder undesignated)
Missions	\$808.30	\$613.00	\$200.00	\$1,221.30	Designated
Covenant Hands	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$0.00	Designated
Apportionments	\$0.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,330.25	\$169.75	Designated
Education	\$1,176.42	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,176.42	Designated
Memorial Designated	\$1,278.04	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,278.04	Designated
Memorial Undesignated	\$9,991.26	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$9,991.26	Undesignated
Trustee savings	\$1,412.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,412.00	Designated
BUMC Undesignated Savings	\$10,097.71	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,097.71	Undesignated
Quilt Group	\$168.70	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$168.70	Designated
BAYM	\$1,047.68	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,047.68	Designated
Outgoing Charitable Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	Designated
BUMC Programs savings	\$3,976.03	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,976.03	Designated
Totals	\$40,260.72	\$13,109.00	\$18,302.29	\$35,067.43	
YTD Totals	\$43,289.70	\$43,710.41	\$51,932.68	\$35,067.43	

GRIEF GROUP: Our next grief group meeting at Byron UMC is **Wed., May 13, 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.

SUMMER CHURCH CAMP: Registration for summer church camp through Camp Minnesota is now open! Pastor Andy will lead a Sr. High camp at Northern Pines the week of June 21st, and camp offerings are available for younger campers that same week. Grab a Camp Minnesota brochure in the narthex for more information or speak with the pastor.

CHOIR CONCERT: The Byron UMC Grace Notes Choir and the Pax Christi Catholic Church Praise Band will be presenting a free concert at our church on **Sunday, May 17th, at 2 pm.** This is the second year that we have collaborated with them through our choir director, Joe Kelley, who also leads and plays with the praise band. The theme of this year's concert is Sacred Creation. A free-will offering will be collected to benefit Family Services Rochester. Refreshments will be served after the concert, and baked goods will be for sale to benefit the church campers.

NEW CHURCH WEBSITE: The new website has launched!

Go to <https://www.byronunitedmethodist.org> and check it out or scan this QR code with your smartphone. It is still under some construction needing some updates and added page content. The giving page is fully functional for registering and giving online. Check it out!



NEW MEMBERS: Welcome to Dan & Tammy Neseth and Ron & Rosie Allen who joined the church on Sunday, May 3rd. We are so glad to have them as part of the church family.

LOVE OFFERING 2026: Each year, churches in the Minnesota Annual Conference take a Love Offering for missions in conjunction with our Annual Conference Session. The 2026 Annual Conference will take place June 16-18, 2026, at the River's Edge Convention Center in St. Cloud, with a theme of "Created to Serve Joyfully".

The 2026 Love Offering gifts will be distributed to:

- Midwest Mission (30%)
- Love Boldly Mental Health Ministries Grant for Minnesota Conference Churches (20%)
- Endowment for Ministerial Education (20%)
- Minnesota Conference Emergency Response Fund (20%)
- Volunteers in Mission (VIM) Scholarships (10%)

You can give to the offering through the church by designating "Love Offering" in the memo line of your check, on your offering envelope, or by giving online through the church website giving page and choosing "Love Offering" as your designation. Thank you for your generosity.

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: Pastor Beth Perez; Jeff Schmidt (son-in-law of Anita Carlson); Ruth Wescott (cousin of Janet Sinning), 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 and for those who mourn: Eternal God, by your steadfast love, open your arms of mercy to those who have died, that they may find their place with you, and look with compassion on those who grieve, that they may be comforted by your sure presence and filled with hope in your goodness, especially now: Marlene Sovereign (mother of Sue Vick); Julie McCoy; 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).

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.



CREATION CARE TIP: Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy. (Proverbs 31:9)

No economy can exist for long without a healthy workforce. Industries can insist that contaminated soil and drinking water, an unstable climate, workers' exposure to toxic chemicals, and child labor are unavoidable prices to pay when doing business, but we know we should do better than that. No profits are worth the price of people's

well-being and the health of the planet.

We're seeing more small businesses prove that success doesn't require exploiting workers or the planet. Whether they are our loved ones, neighbors, coworkers, colleagues, or complete strangers, a healthy world can only exist if we stand up for each other.

From article by Michi Trota, *Green American*, Spring 2026

Article submitted by Cathy Huntoon

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.

LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING MINUTES: Meeting of April 15 , 2026 at 7:30 p.m.

Attendance: Terri Nelson (chair), Cathy Huntoon (Mission), Roger Vick (Trustee chair), Chris Miller (Lay Leader), Al Miller (Finance chair), Pastor Andy Petter, Kelly VanDeWalker (Education), Holly Rolandson (SPRC).

Welcome - Terri Nelson

Old Business

Stewardship/Generosity Drive – Pastor Andy updated the team on the conversation he had with Dan Wetterstrom, who is serving as a UMC conference resource, regarding the development of a church stewardship/generosity project. Pastor shared 4 key points

- Stewardship and generosity are aspects of discipleship that should be engaged through the lens of disciple-making
- A disciple takes vows in baptism/profession of faith, then must live into those vows
 - Serving Jesus as lord meaning obeying his teachings about giving and money.
 - Those received as members of the local congregation promise to support the ministries of the church by their prayers, their presence, their gifts and their service (gifts include financial giving not just talents)
- Benchmarks of growing/mature disciples
 - Propositional giving – tithing
 - Year to year growth in pledges/commitment
 - Elements of sacrifice in giving
- Generosity (Goodness) is a fruit of the spirit
 - Acts of devotion foster personal spiritual growth

Pastor Andy is working to identify a team to assist with development of a Generosity/Stewardship program starting in the fall.

Characteristics of Disciples – The discussion on Generosity/Stewardship leads into the Characteristics of Disciples. Pastor Andy shared feedback he has received from the leadership on the Characteristics of Disciples matrix from awakening to maturing and next steps.

- Identification of specific behaviors and benchmarking that we expect to see from disciples to different stages of formation
- Create a simplified easy to understand system that conveys these expectations and explains how the church helps people to grow into those expectations.
 - How does the church facilitate commitment to greater discipleship?
 - Leaders model mature discipleship
 - How does the church enable disciples to live in those commitments?
 - Small groups; Volunteer opportunities; Missional engagement; Frequent and joyful worship; Devotional guides; Bible studies; Accountability; LIFT
 - How does the church make new disciples?
 - What are strategies that encourage people in our community to awaken?
 - What are opportunities to engage with seekers with the intention of guiding them to find Jesus?

Finance

Al Miller provided the Treasurers report as of 3/31/2026

General Checking Balance: \$ 8,860.46

Memorial Account Balance: \$ 11,269.30

Savings Account Balance: \$ 15,485.74

New Business

Recruiting of new committee members – The committee discussed the need to continue to recruit committee members. Terri shared a program on how to recruit members which included having a current committee charge which outlines the committee goals and members responsibilities. Pastor Andy shared that there are committee guides available, he will ask Karen to make these available to committee chairs.

Pastor Report

Pastor Andy and Al Miller shared the facility agreement reviewed by the finance committee between the Church and STEAM Learning Station. STEAM Learning Station is a business based in Kasson providing summer day-camp sessions for school age students on science and technology programs, starting in June until August. The Leadership team reviewed and approved the agreement. This program supports our welcoming church core values for foster belonging and Hope, Help and Healing.

Committee Updates

Trustees – Roger Vick provided the Trustees update, the parsonage water softener issues have been corrected, a new lawn mower will be purchased, continued work on handicap accessibility in the sanctuary, the grant request was denied. The trustees will continue to prioritize projected based on needs and available funding.

SPRC – Holly Rolandson stated there are no updates from SPRC.

Education – Kelly VanDeWalker shared the Education Committee is working last day of Sunday School activities and planning for Vacation Bible School.

Missions – Chris Miller approached the team requesting support for a new mission project, “Community Meal”, this would be a free monthly meal held at the church, starting in July replacing the Taco Dinner fundraiser. Chris is still in the process of collecting information on structure of the project. The Leadership team voted in support of the project proceeding.

Closing – Pastor Andy closed the meeting in prayer.

Next meeting – next meeting is May 13th at 7:30

Minutes submitted by Terri Nelson

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://www.byronunitedmethodist.org>. Click on GIVE or scan this QR code with your smartphone. Once there, go to GIVE and 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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