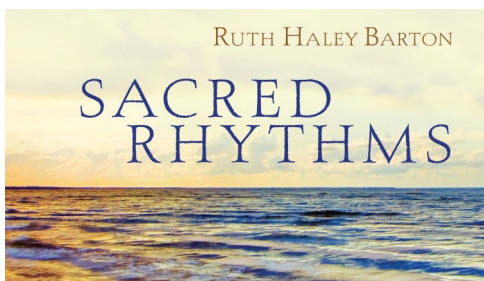


# Our Journey Together

Have you ever thought, “I go to church, I pray, but why don’t I feel as though God is present in my life?” If so, know that you are not alone. Many Christians feel the same way. Over this time between New Year and Ash Wednesday we will, as a congregation, be exploring ways that we can arrange our lives so that we become aware of God’s presence with us and so that we can open ourselves up to the kind of spiritual transformation that only God can provide us.



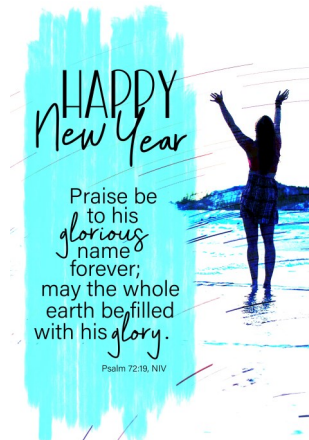
For this exploration we will be using Ruth Haley Barton’s book “Sacred Rhythms: Arranging our Lives for Spiritual Transformation.” While we cannot cover the entirety of the book during our worship times together, we will be focusing on 6 chapters that focus on: Scripture, Prayer, Self-Examination, Discernment, Sabbath, and establishing a Rule of Life.

Each week you will be given a sheet leading you through a process to help incorporate that week’s practice into your life. There are also booklets available to lead you through all of the practices in the book, if you want to know more. I strongly recommend that you get the book and read through each chapter carefully and prayerfully, if you have a desire to grow in your faith and in your relationship with God.

This series, along with the Dynamite Prayer Initiative that is launching in mid-January should set us up for this Lenten and Easter seasons to be truly special. I hope that you all will join in, and that we can grow together as disciples of Jesus Christ.

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## WELCOME New Members

On December 10th, we received 7 people into full membership of our church. Please help us officially welcome:

**Marvin and Pat Hasart, Sharon Kindle,**

**Terry and Deb Kopecky and Collin and Katie Otteson**



### Content Due

Do you have items you would like included in next month’s newsletter? If so, please have them into the church office no later than January 23.





## January Ushers and Greeters

Jan 7, 14

Terry and Deb Kopecky  
Heather Kopecky & Girls

Jan 21 & 28

Sharon Kindle  
Bentley Colvin

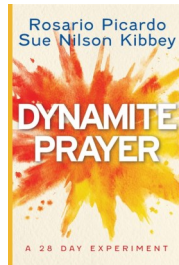
If you need to miss a week in which you are scheduled to usher, it is your responsibility to find someone to fill in for you.

### Financial Update from Leadership Team



**Financial Update as of November 30, 2023:**

2023 General Fund Income Year to Date: \$115,113.21  
 2023 General Fund Expenses Year to Date: \$148,572.36  
 General Fund Difference: (\$33,459.15)



What might happen if we all prayed together daily asking to be shown God’s next ideas rather than just our own?

*Dunamis* is the New Testament’s original Greek word for the resurrection power of God’s Spirit. Our English word ‘dynamite’ gains its origin from this Greek word. When we pray, it’s an opportunity to ask God’s Spirit to break through and transform our lives and our world.

Begin your 2024 by joining the Dynamite Prayer Initiative. This initiative begins on January 14 and ends February 10, 2024. Here is what you can expect:

**Weekly e-mails with a reflection from a leader in the Dakotas-Minnesota Area.**

January 14, Week one: Holy Spirit Impact, January 21, Week two: Holy Spirit Presence, January 28, Week three: Holy Spirit Power, February 4, Week four: Holy Spirit—Our Posture

If you wish to join in, please let Pastor Teresa know. Books will be available soon in the church office for \$8.50

### Birthdays:

Jan 1 Bonnie Hall  
 Jan 3 Seth Greenough  
 Jan 3 Roger Zens  
 Jan 5 Ellie Bertsch  
 Jan 7 Jerry Cotton  
 Jan 8 Connie Fawcett  
 Jan 9 Gloria Porter  
 Jan 9 Kade Whetsel

Jan 11 Andrew Canham  
 Jan 11 Abby Hasart  
 Jan 12 Marlys Aune  
 Jan 13 Bryan Breitling  
 Jan 13 Kay Lynn Burnham  
 Jan 13 Preslie Russell  
 Jan 19 Hagen Fritzsche  
 Jan 20 Scott Bowar  
 Jan 22 Marshall Conkey

Jan 22 Karen Steptoe  
 Jan 23 Jim Henson  
 Jan 23 Doris Slunecka  
 Jan 24 Myles Deuter  
 Jan 24 Dwight Greenough  
 Jan 24 Eric Hasart  
 Jan 25 Larry Ames  
 Jan 28 Kelly Fernholz  
 Jan 30 Rita Ellsworth

### Anniversaries:

Jan 4 Bill & Ellen Canham  
 Jan 7 Joe & Lisa Fritzsche  
 Jan 9 Colton & Amber  
 VanDerWerff  
 Jan 27 Lee & Bev Cain



\*\*\*Please note these minutes have not yet been approved and are subject to modification\*\*\*

Leadership Team Meeting  
December 12, 2023

## I. Call to Order

Chairman Joe Fiala, called the December 12, 2023 Leadership Team meeting to order at 5:18 pm in the Library of the church. The sub-committees met at 5:00pm.

Members present: Pastor Teresa Whetsel, Andrea Fiala, Joe Fiala, Sara Gates, Dwight Greenough, Eugene Moncur, Mike Moncur, JoAnn Morford, Karen Steptoe, and JoAnn Testerman. Absent was Chris Keeter, Shirley Hofer and Janice Moncur were visitors.

## II. Loving

Opening Devotional – Pastor Teresa lead the opening devotion. The devotional was taken from “Disciplines” daily devotions. It was based on verses from Isaiah 61. The main thought was a reminder that God is always at work in each one of us whether we can see it or not.

The Mission Statement of the UMC: “To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world”. Everything we do as a church should contribute to this mission; was read silently and thought about by each member of the Team.

Where have you seen God at work lately? Pastor Teresa said Sunday when Collin couldn’t find the music for the Lord’s Prayer and the congregation sang it acapella was really beautiful and was God sent. Mike Moncur said they are really seeing God at work in the response to the Angel Tree. Others collectively mentioned having new people join the church last Sunday. Also mentioned were the beautiful sunrises and sunsets God is giving us.

Pastor Teresa led the group in prayer at the end of the devotional.

The Team then moved on to the business portion of the meeting.

## III Learning

Approval of Consent Calendar – Chairman Joe Fiala asked for a motion to approval all items of the Consent Calendar or it can be separated if necessary.

Andrea Fiala made a motion to approve the consent calendar items as stated. JoAnn Morford made a second to the motion. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Secretary’s Minutes approval for October 2023

Secretary’s Minutes approval of Charge Conference

Motion to add Sara Gates, as the new treasurer, to be added to the signature card for Quoin Bank and also authorize her to use the church’s Visa credit card.

Finance Report Approvals for October and November 2023 (as approved by Finance Committee)

b. Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be **Wednesday, January 10, at 5:00pm**. Pastor Teresa said our District Superintendent Dan Bader wanted to meet with the Leadership Team in January. She asked if this date would also work to meet with him following Leadership. They affirmed it would. She contacted DS Bader; he replied that **6:30 pm on January 10** would work for him.

## IV. Leading

### Work Team Reports:

**Outreach:** JoAnn Testerman reported Outreach will still be collecting items for the Mitten Tree through December. She said she took some items to Helping Hands already and they were happy to receive them especially since they were out of mittens at the present time.

**Worship:** Andrea Fiala reported Pastor has the Christmas Eve service planned. It will be at 5:00pm Christmas Eve. There will not be morning service on Sunday the 24<sup>th</sup>.

## **Finance:**

Treasurer's report for October and November - The reports were prepared by Mike Moncur and emailed out to the Leadership Team. Hard copies were handed out at the meeting also. The October report showed revenues at \$11,917.55 and expenses at \$14,560.08 for a general fund difference of (\$2,642.53). YTD general fund difference of (\$31,417.89) The November report showed revenues of \$8,944.00 and expenses at \$10,985.26 for a general fund difference of (\$2,041.26). YTD general fund difference of (\$33,459.15).

Motion was made by Andrea F. to remove Cindy Deuter from Quoin Bank signature card, as she is no longer on the Leadership Team. 2nd was made by Karen S. No further discussion. Motion carried.

## **Trustees:** Andrea Fiala, trustee chairperson reported

Parsonage Repair—New sump pump purchased, and was installed by Virg Whetsel.

Replacement of last projector (rear facing) in sanctuary.—TV and mount have been purchased, waiting for Hughes Electric to do wiring.

Organ Tuned (\$255-Less than last year by \$102-JT) Andrea said he was in town for other jobs and asked to see about doing our organ while here.

## **Staff-Parish Relations:**

Dwight Greenough reported that Staff-Parish committee did the "Stay-Move" form. To honor Pastor Teresa request, they did the move form. He commented that Pastor Teresa will be an asset wherever she goes. Chairman Joe said he would encourage people to ask others what they feel would be a good fit for our church to relay to the District Superintendent when he comes in Jan.

### Thoughts on increasing revenue –

Joe suggested we change the wordage to "becoming a healthy, spirit-filled church to help with increasing revenue". Karen S. said we should look again at our "Dream Big" ideas and think about those things again. We will be talking more with DS Bader about possible sharing with Highmore/Harrold Parishes in the next year. It was also mentioned that inflation plays a part in church giving as in all other parts of our lives. Giving is an extension of the spiritual health of a congregation.

Hunters Breakfast – JoAnn Testerman said the breakfast brought in \$1561 and expenses were \$611.14 giving a profit of \$949.86. It had been stated that the money raised will go to the general fund. Mike M. said we needed a motion to approve moving the money to the general fund. JoAnn Morford made a motion to move the \$949.86 from Hunters' Breakfast to the General Fund. Karen Steptoe seconded the motion. All voted in favor, motion carried.

Meeting with District Superintendent – DS Dan Bader will be January 10 at 6:30. The purpose of this meeting is to form a profile of what the church is looking for in our next pastor.

### Pastor's Report

Pastor Teresa reported the children's program will be this Sunday and it will be interactive with the congregation. Last week at Youth Group, Julie Stoll from Faulkton came to talk to the group. In her talk she suggested to the kids to look in the midst of the ordinary to look for the extraordinary things.

This week some the Blachford House residents will be bringing supper and staying for a time of fellowship and playing Bingo. Pastor also said she is beginning work on her big projects for ordination. She will be creating a 6-week Bible study centered on the first 11 chapters of Genesis. She is also doing a "making disciples" project in which she has to write a devotional. Plus there are more after these.

Lay Leadership openings for the fall–Work still needs to be done to fill the empty positions.

Other discussion – Discussion was had on why we do not sing Christmas carols in Advent, as well as asking the choir to help lead unfamiliar songs.

Karen Steptoe commented that the people who joined church last Sunday, should have been introduced especially for the people watching on line. Pastor agreed and said she this was an oversight and they would be listed in the Newsletter.

Chairman Joe, thanked everyone for their comments and feed-back and that it was all good discussion for helping Pastor and worship committee to implement in the future.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned with The Lord's Prayer at 6:08p.m.

JoAnn Testerman, recorder

# January 2024

Sun

Mon



Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 Christmas UN-Decorating After Worship	8 Hymn Sing Nursing Home 6:15 pm	9 UWF Meeting Library 1:30	10 Leadership Team-5:00 Meet with DS Bader 6:30 Youth Group Resumes 6:00	11	12	13
14 POTLUCK DINNER 	15	16	17 UWF Work Day • 10-2 our church • Senior Boxes	18  Food Truck Noon-1	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Miller First United  
Methodist Church

610 East 4th Ave  
Miller, SD 57362

Phone: 605-853-3656

E-mail:

millerumc@midconetwork.com

Find us on Facebook at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/fumcmillersd>



## A year that whispers Jesus

For author Nancy Tichy, a small holiday gift once sparked big-picture thoughts about Christian living. One December she received a kitchen towel with the message "I want a Christmas that whispers JESUS." That prompted thoughts of what it's like to have an entire year that whispers Jesus.



For starters, that involves daily quiet time, devotion and prayer. "Sometimes I wake with the thought of a person on my mind," writes Tichy. "I'm quiet with this impression, interceding for the family member or friend until it has lifted. Could this be a whisper from our Savior?"

Many other daily occurrences are "worthy of Jesus' whispered response of love," Tichy points out. That's true whether we're distracted by tasks and troubling thoughts or buoyed by encounters with contentment and joy. "For me," she writes, "whispering is part of intimacy, and that is what I want to make a hallmark of the coming year. I want closeness with our Savior that enables me to hear from him, even when he whispers."