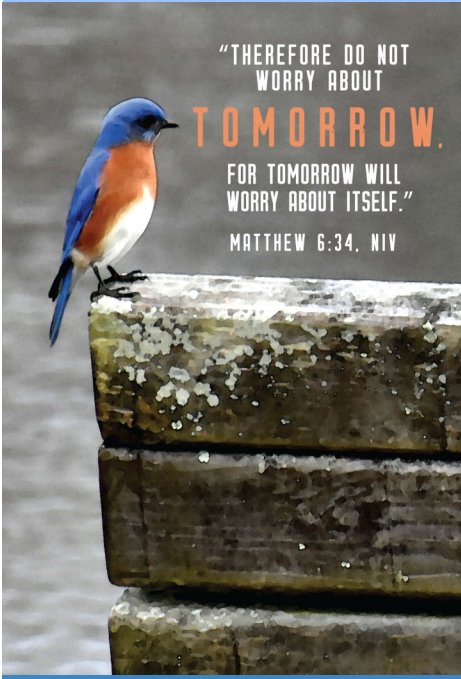




**JANUARY 2020**

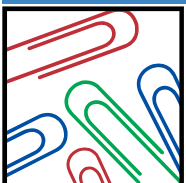
Issue No. 208



**9:00 AM—Brady** 1st & 3rd week

**9:15 AM—Dutton** 2nd & 4th week

**11:00 AM—Choteau**



**Office  
Hours**

**Mon—Thurs 9am—Noon**

# The SPARK

Newsletter of the Choteau & Brady/Dutton UM Parish

## *Words to start the New Year*

*It is a mistake to be always turning back to recover the past. The law for Christian living is not backward, but forward. Leave the things that are behind, and reach forward to those that are before, for on each new height to which we attain, there are the appropriate joys that befit the new experience.*

*Don't fret because life's joys are fled.*

*There are more in front.*

*Look up, press forward; the best is yet to be.*

—F.B. Meyer

## *A New Year's Wish*

*May your guardian angel forever be near to guide and protect you throughout the new year.*

*May your blessings be many, your failures be few*

*As you embrace the future with hope born anew.*

*May you live day to day with nothing to fear.*

*God bless you and keep you throughout the new year.*

—Clay Harri

*Practice random kindness  
and senseless acts of beauty  
today . . . this week . . . this month . . .  
ALL YEAR LONG!*



Happy New Year Church!

2019 was a year for the books! We have much to celebrate as a Church in Choteau, Brady, and Dutton. We not only laid foundation for ministry in 2020 but we celebrate all that 2019 had to offer in bringing the love and grace of Christ to our communities.

In the first half of 2019 you feed and graduated a group of hungry young men through our youth lunches. In the second half of the year, you gathered and provided lunch for our returning boys and a new group of young ladies! The laughter and excitement that fills the basement each Wednesday is something to behold!

We renewed our partnership with our Lutheran friends down the street and have combined our Children's ministries which culminated in the Progressive Christmas Pageant.

Bar+Church started early in the year and has seen as many as 20 people join at The Livery to have candid conversations about faith and life. Along with Theology on Tap, which continues in Brady, we are truly taking Jesus to our communities in ways that reach as many people as possible.

Lent provided an opportunity to gather in a variety of ways and times and gave us an opportunity to host Missionary Ken to hear about his work in Angola.

Our basement was busy with annual Rummages Sales, Clothing Exchanges, Funeral and Wedding receptions, youth and children's activities, Fall Dinners, and fun and fellowship throughout the year. Thank you to all who helped provide opportunities for people to gather in fellowship, celebration, and grief.

2020 will be a difficult year, as the United Methodist Church has another General Conference scheduled in May of 2020 that is shaping up to be a pivotal moment in United Methodist History. As we get closer to May and there is more concrete information I can share, we will hold another Town Hall meeting to try and get information out and answer as many questions as I can leading into General Conference. Following General Conference in May, I will hold a follow-up Town Hall meeting to do my best to unpack any major changes or challenges with the United Methodist Church. No matter what, I assure you, we will continue to share the love and grace of Jesus Christ in Choteau, Brady, and Dutton.

That being said...I am genuinely excited for what 2020 holds for us in our churches and communities. We have a lot going on in the life of our church. I hope and pray our churches continue to be vibrant, and we continue to explore ways to engage our community in fruitful ways!

Finally, thank you for all of the support you have shown Mikel, the kids, and myself, not only personally, but professionally. We love being in ministry with you, and we love being a family in your churches.

Do Good...  
Pastor Zach



The final episodes of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* aired in 2001, so while some viewers of the film may never have watched an episode of the TV show, Mister Rogers' cultural impact remains lasting and relevant. The show and the film are built around the idea that all people deserve love, respect, and to be heard.

**A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD** is based on the true story of a real-life friendship between Fred and a cynical journalist. This film poses a powerful question we could all ask of ourselves — “What if you were friends with Mister Rogers?” How would it feel to have someone genuinely care about you to the point that you were invited to explore your past wounds, in a safe environment, so that you could experience the healing and freedom found in forgiving?

In this sermon series we are going to explore how to be a neighbor with Jesus and Mr. Rogers. We will explore our feelings and why they are ok, what it means to give extravagantly, working through difficult moments in life, forgiveness and reconciliation, and practice.

Mr. Rogers modeled what it looked like to be a neighbor in the ways Jesus teaches to be a neighbor. In this new year, I hope we can truly be the neighbor's Jesus taught us to be rather than the neighbors those around us try to avoid.

sermon videos available on the church website [www.umchoteau.net](http://www.umchoteau.net)



## Bible Readings for the Month

- Jan. 5:** Isaiah 60:1-6  
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14  
Ephesians 3:1-12  
Matthew 2:1-12
- Jan. 12:** Isaiah 42:1-9  
Psalm 29  
Acts 10:34-43  
Matthew 3:13-17
- Jan. 19:** Isaiah 49:1-7  
Psalm 40:1-11  
1 Corinthians 1:1-9  
John 1:29-42
- Jan. 26:** Isaiah 9:1-4  
Psalm 27  
1 Corinthians 1:10-18  
Matthew 4:12-23

## Upper Room Devotional January / February

regular & large print

Available in the front entryway and the Upper Room rack at the top of the ramp ( with a slot for donations )

## BAR+CHURCH

Tuesday, January 7  
6:00 pm

Stage Stop Inn @ Choteau  
Meet in the Livery



All Are Welcome

**THEOLOGY ON TAP**

Belly Up To The Bar & Talk About Jesus

Tuesday, January 14  
5:30 pm

@ Dusty's Bar & Eatery  
in Brady

## Opportunities for Your Spiritual Growth



**Bible & BREW**

### NEW DEVOTIONAL & PRAYER GROUP

Starting Wednesday, January 22, 2020, I will be hosting a morning prayer group at the new coffee shop, Coffee Creek Coffee, on main street. We will gather for a morning beverage, fellowship, a short devotional, and prayer. We will intentionally pray for people throughout our community and send them a card letting them know we are thinking about them and praying for them. All are welcome, stop in on your way to work or school. This group is another opportunity to gather together in prayer and support.

**When: January 22 at 7:00-7:45 am**

**Where: Copper Creek Coffee**

**Why: To join together in prayer**

**Who: ALL**



### HAPPENING ON WEDNESDAYS! Will resume January 8

Choteau UMC is partnering with Trinity Lutheran in providing a children's ministry for children in preschool through grade 5.

**Children are invited to "Connect" at Trinity Lutheran Church:**

5:15 - 6:15 pm—gathering and then split into two groups by age;  
Christian education and activities

6:15-6:45 pm— Dinner

6:45-7:00 pm—Music and Worship



Time : 12:00-12:45 pm

### Wednesday Youth Lunch Will resume January 8

We continue to provide Jr. & Sr. High Youth (grades 7-12) a time to gather for lunch. We host our Jr. & Sr. High students for lunch each Wednesday throughout the semester. We hope this will provide a space for us to gather our youth and continue to build our relationship around food, fellowship and the Gospel.

## Skyline Lodge Bible Study

Monday mornings - 10:30 a.m. Skyline Lodge, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Weekly—Mondays

CCC (coffee, conversation, communion)

Thursday, January 23—2:00 pm—Skyline Social Room



## OUR DEEPEST *Sympathy*

*to the families and friends of*

**Bonnie Crary**

*Death – December 2, 2019*

**Karen Moore Noel**  
(Mother of Mikel Bechtold)

*Death – December 5, 2019*

**Charles Nauck**

*Death – December 6, 2019*

**Robert “Bob” Snodgrass**

*Death – December 6, 2019*

**Andrew “Gus” Jordan**

*Death – December 7, 2019*



## **Sunday, January 12** **Covenant Renewal & Reaffirmation of Baptism**

We will celebrate any Baptisms and a Reaffirmation of our Baptism.

*Contact Pastor Zach for more  
information on baptism  
or if you or a family member  
wish to be baptized  
on this particular day, or any Sunday.*

## **Dare Mighty Things**

*It is not the critic who counts; nor the one who points out how the strong person stumbled, or where the doer of a deed could have done better. The credit belongs to the person who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; who does actually strive to do deeds; spends oneself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who at worst, if he or she fails, at least fails while daring greatly...*

*“Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs though checkered by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much because they live in the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat.”*

– President Theodore Roosevelt  
via Apple Seeds



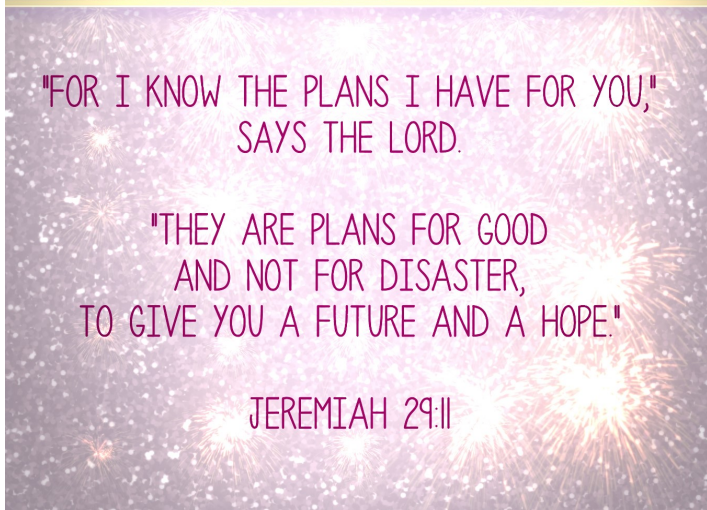
## **JANUARY**

2	Casey Jo Rasmussen
5	Norman Haug Ethan Haug
8	Joey Clark
9	Jeff Howard
10	Margo Lowery
11	Donald Passmore
13	Joni Haug
14	Melody Martinsen
15	Maryetta Hodgskiss Adam Nylund Jamie Nylund
17	Jeanette “Tootie” Rasmussen
22	Connor Christman Joyce Halverson
23	Scot Sessions
24	Garrett Depner
25	Barrett Coccoli August (Gus) Halverson Flint Rasmussen Gene Sentz
27	Jami Gameon
28	Sarah Sentz
30	Anna Lee Erickson
31	Addison Christensen Cody Christman Jacquie Cooney

## **HUMAN RELATIONS DAY** ~ special giving ~

**Sunday, January 19**

Human Relations Day provides a way for United Methodist communities to come together to invest in those in need of hope and an opportunity to thrive. Your gifts on Human Relations Day support after-school programs, prison outreach, gang intervention, youth development and other ministries in communities across the United States.



## Words to start the New Year

“Do not waste your time and money falling into the very costly psychoanalytical trap of looking backwards on your life.

Jesus asks all of us  
not to look backwards  
but to look upwards,  
and to focus on the present,  
joyfully, lovingly, and eager to be  
of service to others.”

– Author unknown

“Happiness is an attitude.  
We either make ourselves miserable,  
or happy and strong.  
The amount of work is the same.”

– Author unknown

“No one is useless in this world  
who lightens the burdens of another.”

– Charles Dickens

“It is of no profit to have learned well  
if you neglect to do well.”

– Author unknown



Christmas Eve



Blue Christmas Service



Christmas Pageant



Community Band



Children's Christmas Pageant



😊 Altar Committee and others (Lila Dunn, Jacquely Cooney, Mary Sexton, Duane Halverson, Casey Lindgren, and Tom Tesch) for all your assistance in preparing the church, sanctuary and grounds for Advent and Christmas season.

😊 Hospitality Committee and others: who coordinated, assisted with setup and cleanup, and provided food in December for Children's Christmas Program meal and Andrew Jordan funeral reception. We are so grateful for your assistance when requested!

😊 OUR CHOTEAU & BRADY MUSCIANS & VOCALISTS: Marsha Hinch, Linda Sentz, Lorrann Depner, Mary Sexton, Wendy Clark, Rich Clough, Pastor Zach & Mikel Bechtold, Ayden DeBruycker, Lila Dunn, Cheryl Schleppe, Patti Winterrowd, Community Band, and Glorioso Bell Ringers for all of the extra hours of rehearsal and beautiful music provided during this Advent/Christmas season.

😊 Sharon Haug, Syd Clark, Diane Inbody and Juli Kostelnik for your many hours of dedication to the recordkeeping of the church finances and special projects throughout the year and especially at year-end.

😊 Shellie Mellinger, Juli Kostelnik, Rachel Christensen, Heather McCartney Duty, Jeanie Long, and Jean Harman for their assistance with worship as communion stewards throughout the year.

😊 ALL VOLUNTEERS who provide the delicious, nutritious meals for the youth lunches. YOU ARE APPRECIATED!

😊 Crystal Carlson and Wendy Clark for your assistance with operating the PowerPoint throughout the year. I am so appreciative! - Lila

😊 All who so graciously accept my request to read scripture on Sunday mornings. Hope you all will continue to honor my requests in 2020! Thanks so much! - Lila

😊 Terry Dunn for arranging ushers for our worship services and the additional help in mowing the lawn and snow shoveling the walks throughout the year.



*Dear Brady UMC,  
Thank you very much for the gift box and its contents. It will help a lot while I am studying for my finals.*

*Sincerely,  
Garrett Depner*

*Choteau UMC Family,  
Thank you so much for the Christmas gift card. Thank you for your thoughtfulness and continued support!*

*Grace and peace! Lila*

*Choteau UMC,  
Thank you so much for the box of goodies. It is always great to have something to snack on while studying! I hope all is well in Choteau, and I can't wait to be back at Christmas.*

*Thanks again!  
Calvin Maples*

*Dear Choteau UMC,  
Thank you very much for the gift box and all it contained. It will help a lot while I am studying for my finals.*

*Sincerely,  
Garrett Depner*



With the financial assistance from the Memorial Fund, new carpet was installed downstairs in the church (Betty Phillips Room, small classroom, and foyer) on December 18. What a nice improvement to these areas! Check it out!

A special thank you to Ross, Ryan, Garrett Depner; Cliff and Sally Heuscher, Roger Kelly, Pastor Zach and Lila Dunn who responded to the request to move furniture and other items in these rooms to accomplish this project.

We were surprised to find carpet laid over carpet in the small classroom.



*Dear UM Youth:  
Thank you for your recent donation of \$81.50 to the Teton County Food Pantry, collected during the Christmas Stroll. We are grateful for your gift. Through the generous support of many, the Food Pantry has been able to provide food to those in need throughout the year.*

*Sincerely,  
Jennie Garraon  
Teton County Food Pantry*

## YOUR MONETARY GIFTS AT WORK

The ministries of Choteau United Methodist Church are made possible by your on-going financial contributions. Our congregation is 100% self-funded; we receive no outside funding. Your gifts enable us to provide weekly worship, pastoral care, educational opportunities, youth group, Sunday school for children and adults, mission opportunities, the opportunity for us to provide responsible charitable contributions to help those in need, etc. I hope you will consider making a financial contribution to Choteau UMC to support our life-transforming mission. To make a tax-deductible donation you can send in a check to our church office, or contribute on Sundays during the offering. Financial statements are available upon request at the church office.

### VITAL STATISTICS – Choteau

2019 Budget for Choteau	\$109,636
Needed to meet budget –December	109,636
Received through December 29	\$108,965

**Thank you for your on-going support.**



*Seeking and Empowering Disciples of Jesus Christ to Love, Witness and Serve*

**CHOTEAU - BRADY - DUTTON**

**UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**BUSINESS HOURS**

CHOTEAU OFFICE HOURS

Mon - Thur 9am- 12pm

**Website address: [www.umchoteau.net](http://www.umchoteau.net)**

Bookmark the address above to your own computer (add it to your "favorites" list) so you can quickly click on it and stay connected! Use the website to check what's going on and what's coming up in the life of our parish.

Check out the new additions to the website:

- Sermons—video
- Zach's Blog—"Bearded Theologians"

And don't forget our email address :  
**[umc@3rivers.net](mailto:umc@3rivers.net)**



The third season of the Christian year is Epiphany. January 5th, the first day of Epiphany, is called the Feast of Epiphany. Epiphany celebrates the manifestation of the divine nature of Christ to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi. The word Epiphany comes from the Greek *epiphaneia*, meaning "revelation" or "manifestation". Epiphany begins the first Sunday in January and varies in length depending on the date set for Easter.

The liturgical color, for the first and last Sunday of Epiphany, is white, which stands for purity and holiness. The liturgical color used for the other Sunday during Epiphany is green, to signify the growing church and the spreading of the gospel. Methodists refer to the Sunday after the feast of the Epiphany and Kingdomeide, when the liturgical color is green, as Ordinary Time. The symbol of the season of Epiphany is the baptismal font, signifying the baptism of new believers in the Gospel.



### **Please remember to call**

**Pastor Zach office 466-2641;  
cell 868-8695)**

when one of our UMC family members needs a card or visit because of loneliness, illness or other crisis in their lives.



**Choteau UMC 11:00 am worship**

**Jan. 5 – Steve & Shellie Mellinger**

**Jan. 12 – Norman & Sharon Haug**

**Jan. 19 – Jerry Herman / Chas Crane**

**Jan. 26 – Scot & Cathy Sessions**

## LAY READERS

**Jan. 5 – Steve Mellinger**

**Jan. 12 – Ross Depner**

**Jan. 19 – Tootie Rasmussen**

**Jan. 26 – TBA**

### **Communion Steward**

**January**

**Juli Kostelnik –Choteau**

**Jeanie Long—Brady**

**Jean Harman—Dutton**



## **2019 Report from Neighbors Helping Neighbors**

### **12-20-2019**

Neighbors Helping Neighbors has had a busy 2019, and this report will help you understand our mission on behalf of lower income families in Teton County. Our total financial assistance given through December 20<sup>th</sup> 2019 is \$28,835.21. Because of our volunteer commitment, we are proud of our low expenses, and some families continue to help us by doing small ‘paybacks’ or acts of kindness for others in our community. Their gifts back to NHN this year totaled \$1,080.00.


Our financial assistance for rent and mortgages totaled \$10,167.22 and helped 18 families. Utility bills; gas, electric, water, propane, and firewood totaled \$7,864.05 for 24 families. Gift cards worth \$5,385.00 helped 84 Choteau, Dutton, Fairfield, and Power families with extra food, gas, school supplies, clothes, and shoes.

Major appliances, furniture, and repair work totaling \$1,282.75 assisted 4 families. Two families received help with medical exams and glasses totaling \$709.25. We were able to buy baby wipes and diapers for the Teton County WIC program and Caring Tree, \$1,511.36. Provided one family with an activity card and sports shoes and clothes, \$304.78. We purchased tires for 1 family, \$820.00, and helped with art lessons and a workshop, \$290.80. Our one ‘special project’ was a donation of \$500 for the Beef to Schools Program.

NHN tries to keep updated on current resources, and our first goal is to refer families to any existing helping organizations. We receive permission from families to check references and to explore individual family budgets to look for ways to help families be sustainable. We are sorry, but NHN is not set up to handle family crisis situations.

Our sincere thanks to all the individuals and organizations who have offered donations to Neighbors Helping Neighbors, and we thank all the individuals in our community who are helping folks privately. We continue to be grateful for the generosity from our community that has given help and hope to families with challenging financial struggles. Donations can be made to NHN, PO Box 303, Choteau MT 59422.

For assistance or further information, please call our Neighbors Helping Neighbors message phone at 466-3646. Leave your name and contact information for a volunteer contact. You can also contact any of our board members: Jaim McPherson-Birkeland, Dawn Baker, Lee Barhaugh, Kristen Boroff, Zanita Hirst, Cynthia Rice, Linda Sentz, and Neal Wedum.

 **Choteau  
United Methodist Church  
P.O. Box 108  
12 First Ave NW  
Choteau, MT 59422**

Phone: 406-466-2641  
Email: [umc@3rivers.net](mailto:umc@3rivers.net)  
Web: [www.umchoteau.net](http://www.umchoteau.net)  
Facebook.com/Choteau UMC

Zach Bechtold, Pastor  
Lila Dunn, Admin. Assist.



Seeking and Empowering Disciples of Jesus Christ to Love, Witness and Serve

**This month's newsletter is sponsored by:**

**Duane Halverson**

**In celebration of birthdays:**

**Joyce E. Halverson**

**94 years on January 22**

**August (Gus) L. Halverson**

**7 years on January 25**

**Please continue to consider sponsoring an issue of *The Spark* for \$40, and your sponsorship will be noted in the newsletter.**

*What a nice recognition in honor or memory of someone, or as a gift!*

Submit your sponsor information to the parish office.