



Groton & Conde
United Methodist Church

Newsletter

February 2020

906 N 1st St, Groton, SD 57445

...from Pastor Brandon

Hello Church Family,

In a book I'm currently reading called *Worship: The Ultimate Priority* by John MacArthur, I came across a story I found quite comical, but also quite interesting.

In 1977, Maria Rubio of Lake Arthur, New Mexico, was assembling a burrito when she noticed that the skillet marks on one of her tortillas resembled the face of Jesus. Excited, she showed it to her husband and neighbors, and they all agreed on what they saw.

So she did what anyone would do, she went to her priest to have the tortilla blessed. Maria testified that this tortilla had changed her life. And though the priest, not accustomed to blessing tortillas, was reluctant... he agreed.

Mrs. Rubio took the tortilla home, put it in a shadow-box frame with piles of cotton to make it look like it was floating on clouds and placed it on a special altar in a wooden shack in her backyard. Within a few months, more than 8,000 people came to see the Shrine of the Jesus



of the Tortilla. Within two years, more than 35,000 people had visited the shrine.

What strikes me as humorous to many may be obvious, but what won't let me go with this story is the distorted concept of worship that seems almost more common than genuine, heart-felt, Jesus my life is yours... worship.

Worship isn't simply observance. It isn't even simply seeing God in the world around us. The truth lies in the difference between believing in God and having a relationship with Jesus. Because upon the knowledge of all that Christ Jesus has done for us, we shouldn't be able to

contain the joy placed on our hearts; and relationship and worship... they are the products of a heart that has been given life. That is my prayer for our church, that we are a relational people of God who understand this gift of life offered to us.

In 2005, Mrs. Rubio's granddaughter took the tortilla to school for show-and-tell where someone accidentally dropped it and it shattered. Though the pieces were kept, the draw the tortilla once held had disappeared.

We are the broken ones, and it is Jesus who comes and pieces us back together through His love and grace. Because of that

offering we worship. Let us grow in worship together.

"Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand."
Psalm 95:6-7

With love,
Pastor Brandon Dunham



Pastor
In Office
Tuesday &
Thursday
Mornings

Friday
Day Off



Upcoming Lenten Series

“How did Jesus teach the Greatest Commandment to his disciples?

In his latest book *Reckless Love*, author and Pastor Tom Berlin writes that Jesus taught them to love neighbor first as a way to more deeply love God.

In his exploration of Jesus’ teaching and travels with his disciples, Berlin suggests that Jesus teaches us how to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength by showing us how to love our neighbor. While many hope to learn to be better family, friends,

leaders, and neighbors by finding a deeper relationship with God, what if becoming a better neighbor leads you to that deeper love of God?

In *Reckless Love*, you will consider your life, and learn how loving the people around you will completely renew your faith and give you a new experience of loving God.”

Our Dakotas Conference each year does a recommendation for Lenten materials and we are pleased to be joining with churches across the Dakotas this year in the study of what it means

to worship God through loving our neighbor.

We will be offering small group studies of the book at both churches and this is your invitation to join with us!

-) Tuesdays at 6:30pm beginning March 3rd in Conde
-) Thursdays at 6:30pm beginning March 5th in Groton



Harry Pharis, Jr

Died December 14th



Church Information

Pastor Brandon Dunham
Office Phone 605-397-8270
Parsonage Phone 605-397-4538

Pastor Email: pastorbrandon@nvc.net
Secretary Email: grotonumc@nvc.net
Website: grotonumc.org
Facebook: [facebook.com/grotonsdumc/](https://www.facebook.com/grotonsdumc/)
906 N 1st St Groton, SD 57445



Sermon Series Continues

In Worship...

In the year 2020, we as a united church are embarking on a journey of the heart. Inspired by Matt Redman's classic ballad, "The Heart of Worship", we have been traveling through the landscape of worship identifying what it is, but more importantly where it comes from.

We've talked about worship as first, a gift to us from God. We've shared in the sacrifice of worship we take on as our response to God's gift and also the celebration of victory in God's pursuit of our hearts.

As we approach Lent we will continue in our theme of worship, speaking to the feast we receive in Communion, the reason we sing, who our leader is in wor-

ship, and the wisdom found in meeting Christ.

I pray that our church find hearts that have been warmed through our season of seeking meaningful and true worship. A spiritually enriched group of people who are connected to God and His offering of life to us.



March 8th is Confirmation Sunday. 8th Graders being Confirmed are: Lane Tietz, Emma Schinkel, Holden Sippel, and Tristan Kampa



Taste & See - Bible Study

Groton Tuesday 10 am Bible Study plans on starting "Taste and See" Feb 11.

God is a foodie who wants to transform your supper into sacrament.

One of America's most beloved teachers and writers, Margaret Feinberg, goes on a remarkable journey to unearth God's perspective on food.

She writes that since the opening of creation, God, the Master Chef, seeds the world with pomegranates and passionfruit, beans and greens and tangerines. When the Israelites wander in the desert for forty years, God, the Pastry Chef, delivers the sweet bread of heaven. After arriving in the Promised Land, God reveals himself as Barbecue Master,

delighting in meat sacrifices. Like his Foodie Father, Jesus throws the disciples an unforgettable two-course farewell supper to be repeated until his return.

This groundbreaking book provides a culinary exploration of Scripture. You'll descend 400 feet below ground into the frosty white caverns of a salt mine, fish on the Sea of Galilee, bake fresh matzo at Yale University, ferry to a remote island in Croatia to harvest olives, spend time with a Texas butcher known as "the meat apostle," and wander a California farm with one of the world's premier fig farmers.

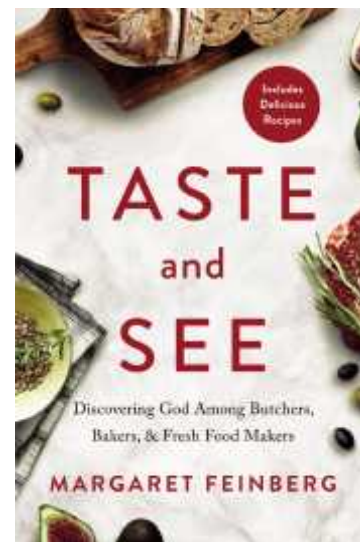
With each visit, Margaret asks, "How do you read these Scriptures, not as theologians,

but in light of what you do every day?" Their answers will forever change the way you read the Bible - and approach every meal.

Taste and See is a delicious read that includes dozens of recipes for those who, like Margaret, believe some of life's richest moments are spent savoring a meal with those you love.

Perhaps God's foodie focus is meant to do more than satisfy our bellies. It's meant to heal our souls, as we learn to taste and see the goodness of God together. After all, food is God's love made edible.

See you around the table



Groton Sunday School



The Camping Books are Here!

Tired of winter? Sign up for camp today! There are camps for all ages. Pick up a Dakotas Camps book and sign up for some summer fun today!

The Early Bird discount deadline is April 30th. This will save you \$5/night that you stay at camp.

There is also a friend discount

this year. For each new camper (those who have not been to any Dakotas camp event for 3 years)

you bring to camp you will receive \$25 off the price of your camp not to exceed the price of your event registration fee. Just list your friend when you register and the discount is applied when they register for camp.



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**For Parents
Only!**

GOSPEL | Solutions to Social Issues

No Charge To Attend

**Seminar begins at 6:30 p.m.
Refreshments will be served
after the event**

Free Will Offering

SPONSORED BY GROTON CHURCHES
United Methodist Church
906 N 1st St, Groton
Wednesday, Feb. 5, 2020

Thanks to the Groton Churches that have hosted these seminars:
Groton United Methodist, Groton Christian & Missionary Alliance, Emmanuel Lutheran

Guest Speakers

Levi Jensen and Police Dog Handler Shane Johnson with the SD Highway Patrol will be presenting on drug awareness for parents of all ages of children, grandparents, and school administrators. There will be some drug samples on hand for attendees to view, along with time to ask questions both during and after the presentation. Those that have a vested interest in deterring the drug use in our region and community are encouraged to attend.

Andrea Kost, the Safe Harbor Shelter Coordinator has worked with at risk children since the age of 21. Andrea was the recreational coordinator and personal counselor at New Beginnings for a year and a half. Andrea and her husband also started 'Almost Home', a therapeutic foster care for girls age 13-21 coming out of lock down residential facilities and also housed 40 plus teenage girls in their home. Andrea will be sharing her firsthand knowledge of social media and teens. Andrea will present an open discussion about raising our children to be Christian adults in a digital age. She will be discussing popular apps and websites, which ones to be wary of, and how to monitor your youth/teens activities. She will also be talking about how to balance sheltering them and exposing them to an online world to help them to be smart consumers.

Pastor Brandon Dunham will share a short Gospel message.

Snow Date: Feb. 12th

Called: Brandon's story, leaning on God

By: Doreen Gosmire, director of communication, Dakotas UMC (this can also be viewed on the Dakotas Conference Website)

"It's scary, but it is not. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else. It is hard and important work. This has been the closest that I have ever been in my relationship with God. I have no other option. It is a complete dependency on Jesus. It has been great for me, for my marriage, and our churches. It has been the perfect fit," says Pastor Brandon Dunham, who is in his second year of pastoral ministry, serving the United Methodist Churches in Conde and Groton, South Dakota.

Dunham grew up in Rapid City, South Dakota. He went to college at South Dakota State University (SDSU) in Brookings, South Dakota. Brandon took a break from college and ended up in Watertown. He connected with First United Methodist Church. Rev. Joel Higgins, who was serving at First UMC, invited him to play acoustic guitar and help with youth ministry.

He returned to SDSU and finished a degree in Hospitality Management. He was working at the church and going to school. He looked around at some of his friends, who were getting opportunities to preach at youth group and other places. He wondered if he could possibly preach. "I thought it would be so cool if I could get a chance to share a message one time. Just to see if I could. I don't even know if I have the gifts to do it," says Dunham.

One day, Rev. Teresa Whetsel, who Dunham had connected with at First UMC in Watertown, contacted him and asked him to preach and conduct worship at Arlington and Lake Preston.

"I went and did that. It went well, and I appreciated the opportunity," says

Dunham.

Dunham did not know what was next, but he was feeling a nudge towards the ministry. After graduation, he learned about a position at First UMC in Watertown. The congregation in Watertown emerged in the Missional Church Consultation Initiative. First UMC wanted to live out prescriptions from the MCCI process, and Dunham was hired to lead contemporary worship, discipleship ministry, and special events and community outreach.



"I saw the position as a fit for me and First UMC," says Dunham. "I was able to explore my call and also do some event coordinating for about three years."

While at SDSU, Brandon met his wife, a double major in Art and Elementary Education from Aberdeen, South Dakota. She finished one degree at SDSU but transferred to Northern State University to complete the second degree.

"So, I was living in Brookings, working in Watertown, and my fiancé was going to move to Aberdeen. I felt like; I need to make a decision. Am I going to continue to live in Brookings? Is Watertown close enough to Aberdeen to commute? I had a lot of conversations with people," says Dunham. "Some of the people I talked with were in the Kairos program. I also spoke with Pastor Sara Nelson, at First UMC in Watertown. They all suggested I talk with Rev. Randy Cross, the district superintendent, about opportunities near Aberdeen."

Brandon spoke with Rev. Cross and found out that there was going to be an opening for a pastor in Groton and Conde. Cross encouraged Dunham to become licensed as a local pastor. So, Brandon, registered, purchased the books, and attended licensing school.

"The conversations began in February. I received my appointment in March. All of a sudden, in June, I find myself at a licensing school. I packed up and drove to Groton, South Dakota, for the second time in my life at the end of June. A couple of people greeted me, helped me unload my truck, and I am now that pastor at Groton and Conde."

Dunham will continue his education and is encouraged by the district committee of ordained ministry to take it slow. While accepting into his first appointment, going to licensing school, and moving, he got married.

"I was moving into pastoral ministry. I was adjusting to a new town, a new job, and I had to figure out how to be married," Brandon says.

Seminary is part of Pastor Brandon's plan. He is working on when the best time would be to start seminary. "Seminary is absolutely in my plan. I am trying to figure out, right now, how I can be effective in my current context. I want to know that I can manage things before I spread myself too thin."

His wife is now an elementary art teacher in Aberdeen, at the school she attended as a child.

"I found it to be interesting how this has all come to be. I went to college with no intention of working in the church. I remember when I was in high school, feeling this little call to be a teacher. I was really good friends with the Britt family. Matt is just a year younger than me, one of my best friends growing up. I looked at Matt's dad, who was teaching at Middle School and assisting with things at the church. I was like, maybe I could be a teacher and work at the church. I thought there is no way you're ever going to work at the church. I just dismissed it."

The congregations are growing. People are feeling fresh and renewed in God. There is a change in both of the congregations, a season of renewal. People have become engaged in ministry.

Continued...

Brandon's Story Cont..

The congregations of Groton and Conde are part of the Children's and Youth Ministry cohort. Dunham visited with the leaders of the congregation.

"We are about to enter into this cohort. It is going to be an excellent opportunity for us. Sunday School is getting ready to start. We did not have a Sunday School superintendent. It looked like it was something that I was going to have to take on. It was a daunting, big job. We had an incredible response of people flock to Sunday School this year. There are ten teachers this year for three classrooms, two for every room, and substitutes. A former Sunday School superintendent retired from their job and will be a co-leader. SS has been an explosion, singing on Sunday in worship, a Christmas program, having purpose and direction. It is not a scary thing that we have to try to fit into our schedules every year.

There is a distinction in joining the cohort. It is empowering to be asked to participate. It made a lot of people feel like there was a vision that they could be part of.

Every day Dunham faces challenges. He is in the second year of pastoral ministry. "Things that brought me the most worry, in the beginning, have ended up being the most fulfilling. Things like planning Advent, Lenten season, funerals seemed daunting. I love all of that now."

He is still trying to figure out what the schedule looks like. "I have tried hard to figure out what the natural ebb and flow of the church is. I am trying to figure out the visions of each of the congregations and how I can contribute to that. What are the needs and desires of the congregations?"

His theme for 2020 is a product of Matt Redmond's song, *The Heart of Worship*—"When the music fades, and all is stripped away. I simply come longing to bring something that is of worth that will bless. I am coming back to the heart of worship, and it is all about you, Jesus.."

During Advent, he felt the pressure of doing everything. Dunham saw the importance of taking a step back and have everyone engage and be present in worship.

As United Methodist congregations, there are a lot of committees for the congregations in Conde and Groton. "We don't necessarily have a lot of activity within our committees," says Brandon. "We ask people to be a part of the ministries of the church, trying to find ways to bring that engagement up. I want to make sure that people feel empowered to make a difference, not just in their lives but in the lives of other people."

Dunham states that he does not have great big plans for projects or buildings. He views the two congregations as healing from a lot of transitions. "We are getting to a point we are ready to get to work again," he says.



Brandon Dunham helps lead music during the 2018 Dakotas Annual Conference session. Photo by jlynn studios.

Below: Pastor Brandon Dunham, last row, third from the left, gathers for a photo with other licensed local pastors and Bishop Ough at the 2018 Annual Conference. Photo by jlynn studios.





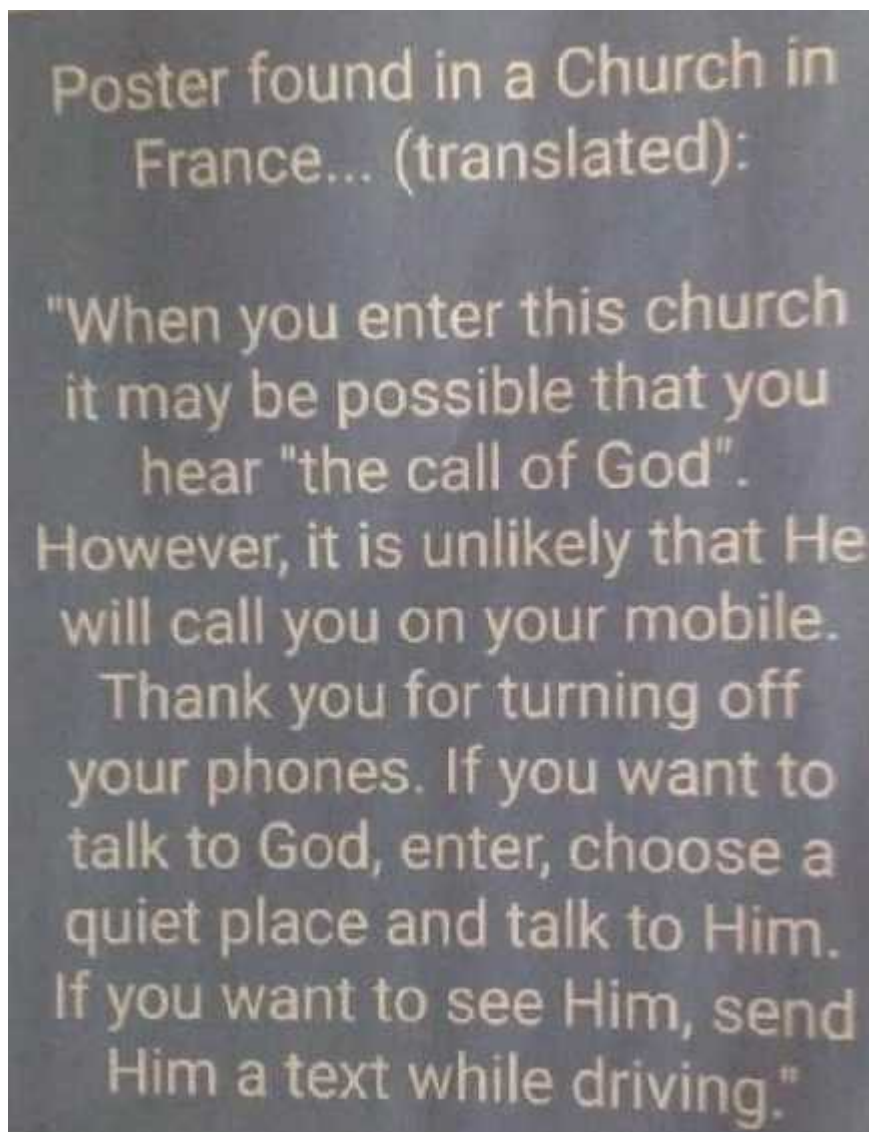
Burden Bearers

Bear one another's burdens, the Bible says. It is a lesson about pain that we all can agree on. Some of us will not see pain as a gift; some will always accuse God of being unfair for allowing it.

But, the fact is, pain and suffering are here among us, and we need to respond in some way. The response Jesus showed was to bear the burdens of those he touched. To live in the world as [Jesus'] body, his emotional incarnation, we must follow his example.

The image of the body accurately portrays how God is working in the world. ... We announce his message, work for justice, pray for mercy ... and suffer with the sufferers.

—Philip Yancey, *Where Is God When It Hurts?*



Our Church Celebrations...



Groton

Feb 2 Journey Zieroth

Feb 4 KayLynn Overacker
Tim Olson

Feb 5 Scott Eisenbeisz
Todd Thurston

Feb 7 Gary Voss

Feb 8 Gage Sippel
Larry Wheeting (80)

Feb 10 Alan & Jolene Townsend
Andrea & Scott Eisenbeisz
Brenda Madsen

Dion Bahr

Nori Hinman

June Thompson

Feb 12 Skylar Kramer
Yvonne Lorenz

Feb 14 Diane Nissen

Feb 16 Pernell Graf

Feb 19 Gaylene Voss
Robin O'Neill

Feb 20 Jim & Judy Zeck

Michael Wells

Feb 21 Wyatt Morehouse
Joe Nelson

Feb 22 Anthony Schinkel

Feb 25 Brent Morehouse
Greg Heitmann

Conde

Feb 4 Donna Walter

Feb 5 Richard Sanderson

Feb 9 Vicki Stark

Feb 15 Tim & Betty Geist

Feb 19 Tyler Stark

Feb 22 Horace Walter

80th Birthday

Larry Wheeting
February 8th

Greetings may be sent to
PO Box 618
Groton, SD 57445

Conde MISSION STATEMENT

"The Conde United Methodist Church is seeking to satisfy the spiritual and physical needs of all."

Groton UMW

The next Groton UMW Meeting will be on Feb 20th at 1:30 pm. The program will be led by Anita Lowary and Gloria Pharis will be the hostess. See you there!



United
Methodist
Women

FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

Groton March Family Committee

Anita & John Lowary

Dale & Traci Kramer

Cheryl Hanson

Lance & Kristi Hawkins, Kaycie

Rick & Sarah Hofer

Yvonne Lange

Laurel & Monte McNickel

Diann & Brad Morehouse

Robin O'Neill, Grady

Karla Pasteur

Carna & Cliff Pray

Dwight & Eugenia Strom

Linda & Gary Thurston

Todd Thurston

Anita & Gary Voss

Honorary Members

) Susan Odland

) Rose Tewksbury

March Responsibilities

-) Check Kitchen Supplies for the month
-) Check & Clean Oven and Fridge as necessary.
-) Coffee Hour workers (make coffee, provide cookies, launder towels, and remove trash)
-) 2 Ushers for each Sunday
-) Straighten the Sanctuary Pews
-) Change the banners as needed as per schedule in back of this book
-) Maintain the Altar Flower Arrangements
-) Shovel snow from doorways before Church
-) Potluck 2nd Sunday - give church secretary details for

bulletin

-) Change decorations on tables in fellowship hall with the seasons
-) Serve at Avantara Nursing Center - 4th Sunday
-) 5th Sunday may buy donuts and give bill to church treasurer
-) Order Confirmation Cake for coffee hour
-) Gifts organized by Confirmation Leaders
-) Hospitality sets up gift table for Confirmation Sunday

March 2020

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Groton Stewardship Report Dec 2019

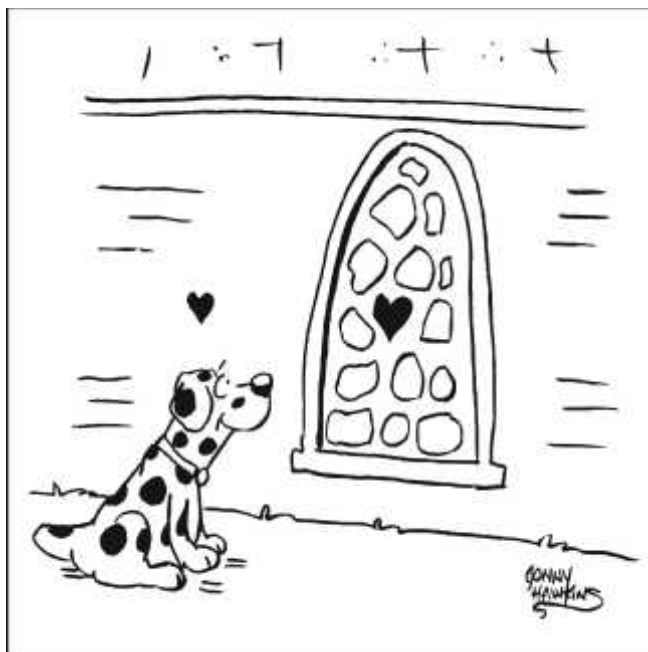
Average
Wkly Giving
\$1,734

Needed Wkly for
Church Mission
\$2,347

Average Weekly
Attendance Sunday
62

Christmas Eve 182

Total Building Fund
Donations
for Repairs
\$515





Our Church Happenings...

Feb 5 Gospel Solutions to Social Issues (For Parents) at 6:30 pm UMC

Feb 12 No Confirmation

Feb 19 Groton Ad Council 7 pm

Feb 20 Groton UMW 1:30 pm

Feb 22 Worship at Rosewood at 10 am

Feb 23 Worship at Avantara at 3 pm

Feb 26 Conde Ash Wednesday Service 5 pm

Feb 26 Groton Ash Wednesday Service 7 pm

Mar 3 Conde Lenten Study with Pastor Brandon begins 6:30 pm

Mar 5 Groton Lenten Study with Pastor Brandon begins 6:30 pm

Mar 8 Confirmation Sunday

February 2020						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29