



Groton & Conde & Britton UMC

Newsletter

February 2026

906 N 1st St, Groton, SD 57445

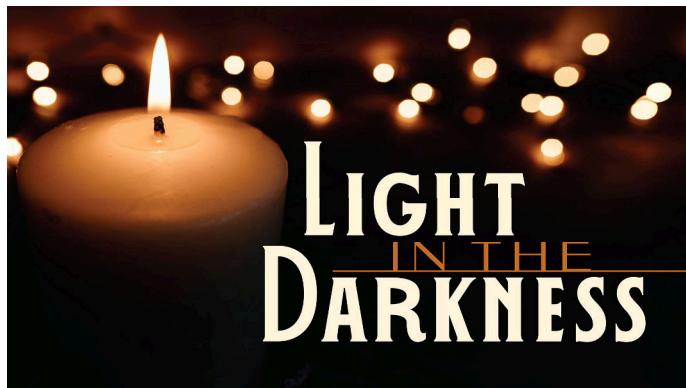
...Pastor Rob's Ponderings

Dead of Winter

I assume most have heard this phrase, “the dead of winter.” We seem to be living in it right now with colder than usual temperatures and even the southern part of the country dealing with snow and ice. The end of January also lends itself to this phrase. We have a month and a half, at least, of winter left with the promise of snow and ice well beyond.

I’m also pondering this phrase because my “financial wiz” brother has been encouraging me lately to get my will and estate “in order in case of my death.” Now, I don’t if my brother received a word from God suggesting my death is nearer than I think, but his advice has got me thinking—and moving. I recently contacted a local attorney to talk through what I needed to do so my relatives will know my final wishes. As it turns out, because I’m a single pastor without children, most of my “final wishes” have nothing to do with finances. They have everything to do with funeral vs. memorial, burial vs. cremation, and how I want to be remembered.

It seems appropriate “in the dead of winter” to be think-



ing about such things. One of my mortician friends told me his business always increases this time of year. When I asked why he said it was for two reasons: first, people try to live to see a new year and having accomplished it, they “move on;” and, second, the darkness and gloom of this time of year has a great psychological effect on people. I would definitely agree with the second reason. January is dark and gloomy, and I would add dirty as well. With our lack of fresh snow in our area, have you noticed how ‘dirty’ the snow becomes around us? But there is also an alternative way to think about this “dead of winter.” Recently, we read Matthew 4:15-16 which is a quote from Isaiah saying the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali (areas close to Sea of Galilee) which have lived in darkness have seen a great Light. Of course, this

is about Jesus coming into that area. I’m reminded darkness does not last forever. (You can use the ever-increasing amount of morning sunlight in late January as an example.). As Christians, we not only know there is ‘light at the end of the tunnel’ BUT, and more importantly, we know THE Light who walks with us through that tunnel. In the mean time, I think I’m going to take my brother’s advice (he just might know something I don’t) and put down some plans for nieces and nephews. Perhaps, include something about trusting in the light of Jesus Christ.

See you in church

Rob Moorlach



Join us as we begin the season of Lent. Ash Wednesday reminds us of our need for grace and the hope we have in Jesus. Let’s walk together toward the cross and the joy of Easter.

OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Rob
In Office
Tuesday &
Thursday
Evenings
6-8 pm

Monday
Day Off



Feb. 1 – SS 9:30
 8 – SS 9:30
 15 – No SS (President's Day)
 22 – SS 9:30
 Mar. 1 – SS 9:30
 8 – SS 9:30
 15 – SS 9:30
 22 – No SS (Spring Break)
 29 – Palm Sunday – Sing in church 9:30-SS follows
 Apr. 5 – No SS (Easter)
 12 – SS 9:30
 19 – SS 9:30
 26 – SS 9:30
 May 3 – SS 9:30
 10 – Last Day of SS – Sing in church-SS follows
 (Mother's Day)



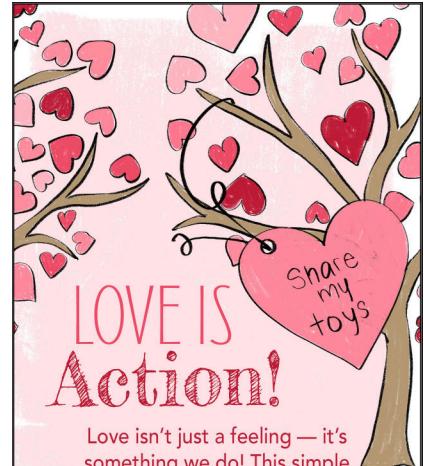
Groton Christmas Sunday School Program had some young piano players. Also had a few more photos come in...



Church Information

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 906 N 1st St Groton, SD 57445



LOVE IS Action!

Love isn't just a feeling — it's something we do! This simple activity reminds us that acts of love, big or small, can grow and bless others.

What you need:

- Construction paper (brown for the trunk, pinks and reds for hearts)
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Markers or crayons



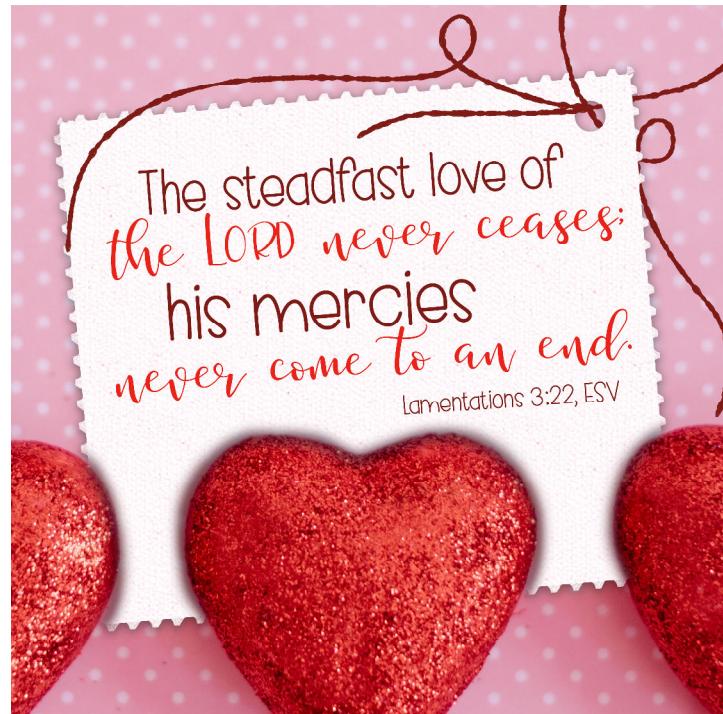
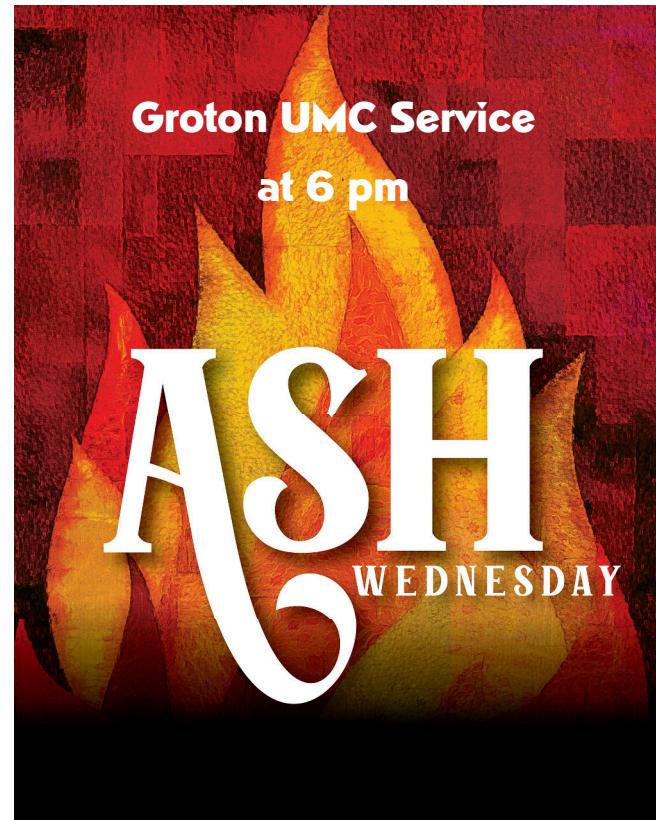
What you do:

1. Cut a large tree trunk and branches out of brown paper and glue it onto a sheet of paper or poster board.
2. Use colorful paper to cut several hearts — these will be your "leaves."
3. On each heart, write loving actions like "share my toys," "pray for others," or "help clean up."
4. Glue the hearts onto the branches to create a full, love-filled tree.
5. Hang it somewhere visible as a reminder to put love into action every day!

"Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."
-1 John 3:18 (NIV)



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GROTON UMC OFFERING STATISTICS

2025 Month	Offering Received	Needed for Budget	Average Attendance	Received for Building Maintenance
January	5,521	9,249	44	255
February	5,753	9,249	42	205
March	8,209	9,249	55	405
April	20,718	9,249	61	505
May	5,964	9,249	65	280
June	5,876	9,249	29	280
July	5,528	9,249	37	280
August	1,287	9,249	37	255
September	5,428	9,249	63	205
October	9,488	9,249	63	255
November	7,624	9,249	83	505
December	11,045	9,249	84	505
YTD Totals	92,441	110,988	55.25	3935



Christian Symbol

CORNERSTONE — The cornerstone is a symbol for Christ. It has Old Testament roots in Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 28:16). In the New Testament, Christ is called the cornerstone in Ephesians 2:20. The IHC and XP on the stone's sides are abbreviations for "Jesus" and "Christ" in Greek.



For God so loved the world

that He gave His

only

begotten

son,

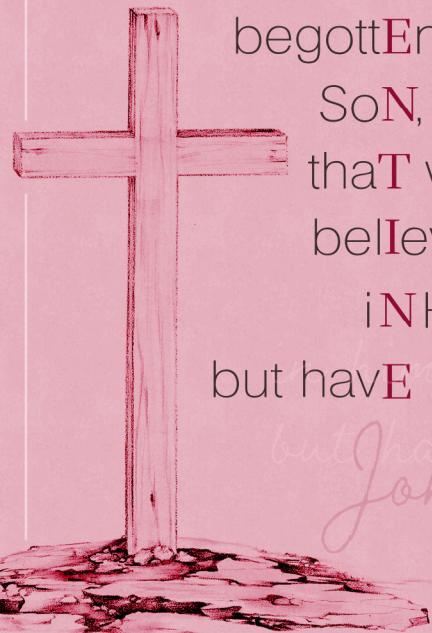
that whoever

believes

in Him should not perish

but have everlasting life.

John 3:16, NKJV



Groton Family Committee - March

MARCH 2026 Chairpersons

Jeanne Wanous
Yvonne Lorenz

Doris and Ron Anderson
Katie Anderson
Rosalie and Brock Ball
Charity and Scott Hinman
Nancy Hinrichs
Yvonne Lorenz
Anita Lowary
Brenda and Tony Madsen
Chris and Tyke Nyberg
Karli and Brad Olson
Kaylyn Overacker and
Tyson Daly
Jesse Overacker
Roger Overacker
John Padfield
Carna and Cliff Pray
Marjae and Dan Schinkel
Jenna and Nick Strom
Carol Strom
Eugenia and Dwight Strom
Jeanne Wanous

Honorary Members

Sharon Wheeting
Louise Thoreson
Betty Strom
Curtis Krueger



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)
- Potluck 2nd Sunday - give church secretary details for bulletin
- 1 Greeter 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
- Change decorations on tables in fellowship hall with the seasons
- 5th Sunday may buy donuts and give bill to church treasurer



March 2026						
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				



The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously in local communities and worldwide connections.

Our Church Celebrations...

Groton

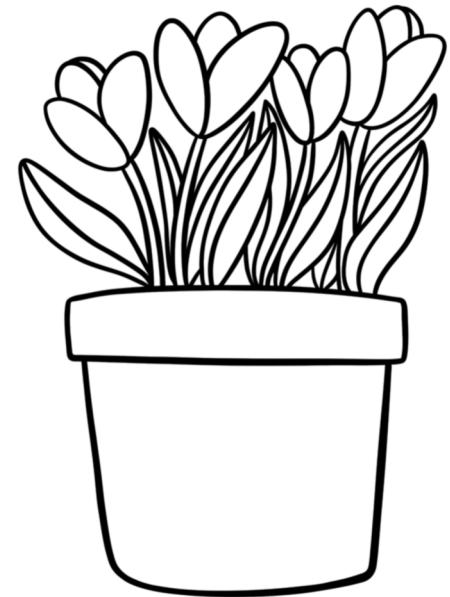
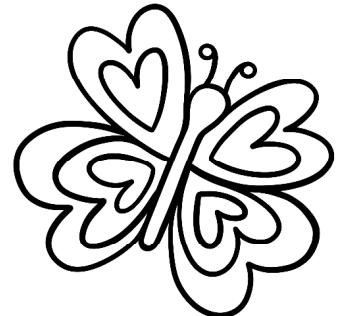
Feb 4 KayLynn Overacker
 Feb 5 Scott Eisenbeisz
 Todd Thurston
 Feb 8 Gage Sippel
 Feb 10 Andrea & Scott Eisenbeisz
 Brenda Madsen
 Dion Bahr
 June Thompson
 Nori Hinman
 Feb 12 Skyler Kramer
 Yvonne Lorenz
 Feb 13 Monica McCranie
 Feb 14 Diane Nissen
 Feb 16 Pernell Graf
 Feb 19 Gaylene Voss
 Feb 20 Michael Wells
 Feb 22 Anthony Schinkel
 Feb 24 Maverick Richmond
 Feb 25 Greg Heitmann
 Luke Johnson

Britton

Feb 10 Scott Bush
 Feb 16 Paityn Erickson
 Feb 25 Vergie Wallace

Conde

Feb 4 Donna Walter
 Feb 15 Tim & Betty Geist
 Feb 22 Horace Walter



The Upside-Down Blessing

The Beatitudes are more than poetic lines from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. They're a radical redefinition of what it means to be blessed. The Greek word *makarios* doesn't just mean "happy." It describes a deep, untouchable joy that pain, loss or hardship cannot erase. As scholar William Barclay wrote, it is "the joy which shines through tears."

Jesus flips the world's idea of success upside down. The "blessed" aren't the powerful or prosperous, but the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek and the merciful. Imagine reading them as "Congratulations, you who feel broken, God's kingdom belongs to you!" His words assure us that, even in suffering, we stand in God's favor.

Real blessing isn't about shiny possessions or smooth sailing. It's the steady, saving presence of God — a life preserver tossed to us when we're struggling to stay afloat. And it's not just an individual promise. Jesus spoke these blessings to a community, a we more than a me. Together, as the body of Christ, we find comfort, strength and the courage to live with joy that nothing in life or death can take away.

— Adapted from HomileticsOnline.com

Conde MISSION STATEMENT

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



Groton Ad Council - January

Chairman, AM Mitchell, called the rescheduled meeting to order. In attendance were AM Mitchell, Jeanne Wanous, Lon Gellhaus, Cliff & Carna Pray, Val Baker, Anita Lowary, and Meri Erickson. Carna shared a prayer prior to the discussion of business.

Both the agenda and the previous minutes were approved on a motion by Anita Lowary.

Correspondence: Thank you notes from two of our recent confirmation students were shared thanking Groton UMC for our support and gifts on their confirmation day. Also, a thank you note was received from one of our Groton UMC members on our Secret Angel recipient list thanking us for the nice cards and little cross they received from one of our Secret Angels.

Committee Reports

Membership—Anita Lowary: Anita reported that we are pleased to have several new attendees interested in membership. She will be working with Pastor Rob to set a date for those interested to formally join the Groton UMC.

Memorial: no updates

Missions - Val Baker/Carna Atherton-Pray: Carna shared that we have no specific missions projects planned currently.

Caring Team—Jolene Townsend: In Jolene's absence, Jeanne Wanous reported that the group is planning to take a group photo on Sunday, February 1 of several church members. The photo will then be included with the February Secret Angel cards that are sent out to members who are not able to attend church regularly as a hello and reminder that they are loved and that we all miss seeing them.

Pastor/Parish Relations: Carna Atherton-Pray shared that this group will meet four times in 2026.

Trustees—Cliff Pray:

Cliff stated that our boiler has been inspected and it passed.

We received a letter from Church Mutual that the free fire alarm they provided which would message Cliff and the city fire response team of a fire has been discontinued & deactivated.

The water alert system they provided will however remain functional.

Cliff has not been able to follow up on a suggestion to tint upper-level sanctuary windows to help improve viewing of the pulldown screen messages during a service. The front door locking & unlocking mechanism still causes people trouble. It was suggested that a note describing how to operate the lock be securely attached to the key to help everyone understand the process.

Treasurer's Report:

Church Treasurer—Jeanne Wanous:

Review the Hartford Steam Boiler Bill of \$140:

It was explained that Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection & Insurance Co. after completing an inspection, pays the required jurisdiction "Certificate Fee" on our behalf and then we reimburse Hartford Steam Boiler.

Pay Raises for Organist & Janitor: Jeanne reminded the council that the 2026 budget included a raise for our organist, but no dollar amount had been approved. After discussing current hourly wages for both the organist and janitor positions, Anita Lowary moved to increase wages for both the organist and the janitor by \$5 / hour. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Financial Secretary—Allen Walter: No report.

Pastor Parish—Meri Erickson: Meri stated that the Pastor Parish budget is doing well. She did, however, remind the council that the parsonage will need a new furnace and air conditioner in the near future as well as some bedroom updates.

Administrative Report: Pastor Rob was not able to attend the rescheduled meeting as he was in Britton conducting their church service.

Old Business:

The Robert Wehde Trust: Former Groton UMC member, Robert Wehde left a trust for the Groton UMC to be distributed after the passing of his wife MaryAnn Wehde. MaryAnn passed away in September 2025. Lon Gellhaus informed the council that in order to finalize the transfer of payments from the Robert Wehde Trust, held by Edward Jones Trust Company, to the Groton United Methodist Church, the Administrative Board of Directors would need to appoint our Ad Council president, A.M. Mitchell, as the official signatory for

the Groton UMC to execute any and all documents for the church.

Motion: Anita Lowary moved that Administrative Council president, A.M. Mitchell, shall be appointed as the official signatory for the Groton United Methodist Church to execute any and all documents allowing the Groton UMC to receive payments from the Robert Wehde Trust 43317005 from Edward Jones Trust Company. The motion was 2nd by Carna Atherton-Pray and the motion was unanimously approved. Lon presented the required official document to A.M. Mitchell as well as to Jeanne Wanous, Secretary, for signatures. The resolution will be filed with these minutes.

New Business:

Christmas Décor Storage & Cleanup: Carna shared that all Christmas décor (except for the outdoor Nativity figures & building and the large sanctuary Christmas tree) has been consolidated and stored neatly in one classroom.

Annual Conference Coverage for Pastor Rob: 2026 Annual Conference will be on June 6 & 7 in Mitchell. Since Carna will probably be attending the conference, Dale Kramer will be asked to conduct church services on that Sunday.

February Ad Council Meeting Date: Even though our regular monthly Ad Council falls on Feb. 18 which is also Ash Wednesday, the council felt that we could still plan our meeting on that date, but possibly adjust the start time.

Kitchen Renovation: The board discussed the need for the kitchen renovation plans to move forward. Anita Lowary motioned that the Ad Council should authorize the formation of a committee to put together plans for the kitchen update. The motion was 2nd and unanimously approved. Carna will ask Pastor Rob to communicate to the congregation that we are looking for volunteers interested in serving on this committee.

Additional Business: Val Baker let Cliff Pray know that the baby changing table in the family bathroom has become loose and is unsafe. Cliff will review and fix the issue.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 pm.

Secretary,
Jeanne Wanous

Groton UMC

February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1  4th Sunday after the Epiphany (green) Communion in Worship (white) 8:15am Conde Worship 9:30am Groton Sunday School 9:30am Groton Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 11:15am Britton UMC Worship	2 Groundhog Day 11:00am The Pantry at Groton Community Center	3 10:00am Bible Study 3:00pm Common Cents Community Thrift Store Downtown 4:00pm The Pantry at Groton Community Center	4  9:30am Community Coffee Hour	5 10:00am Sunday Items Due for Secretary	6	7 10:00am Common Cents Community Thrift Store Downtown
8 5th Sunday after the Epiphany (green) 8:15am Conde Worship 9:30am Groton Sunday School 9:30am Groton Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 11:15am Britton UMC Worship	9 11:00am The Pantry at Groton Community Center	10 10:00am Bible Study 3:00pm Common Cents Community Thrift Store Downtown 4:00pm The Pantry at Groton Community Center	11  9:30am Community Coffee Hour	12 10:00am Sunday Items Due for Secretary	13	14  Valentine's Day 10:00am Common Cents Community Thrift Store Downtown
15  Transfiguration Sunday 8:15am Conde Worship 9:30am Groton Worship 9:30am NO Groton Sunday School 10:30am Coffee Hour 11:15am Britton UMC Worship	16  President's Day 11:00am The Pantry at Groton Community Center	17 10:00am Bible Study 3:00pm Common Cents Community Thrift Store Downtown 4:00pm The Pantry at Groton Community Center	18  Ash Wednesday 9:30am Community Coffee Hour 6:00pm Groton Service 7:00pm Groton Ad Council	19 Newsletter Items Due 10:00am Sunday Items Due for Secretary	20	21 10:00am Common Cents Community Thrift Store Downtown
22  First Sunday in Lent (purple) 8:15am Conde Worship 9:30am Groton Sunday School 9:30am Groton Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour 11:15am Britton UMC Worship	23 11:00am The Pantry at Groton Community Center	24 10:00am Bible Study 3:00pm Common Cents Community Thrift Store Downtown 4:00pm The Pantry at Groton Community Center	25  9:30am Community Coffee Hour	26 10:00am Sunday Items Due for Secretary	27	28 10:00am Common Cents Community Thrift Store Downtown

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Our Church Happenings...

February 14 Happy Valentine's Day

February 16 President's Day

February 18 Ash Wednesday Groton Service @ 6 pm

February 18 Groton Ad Council 7 pm

