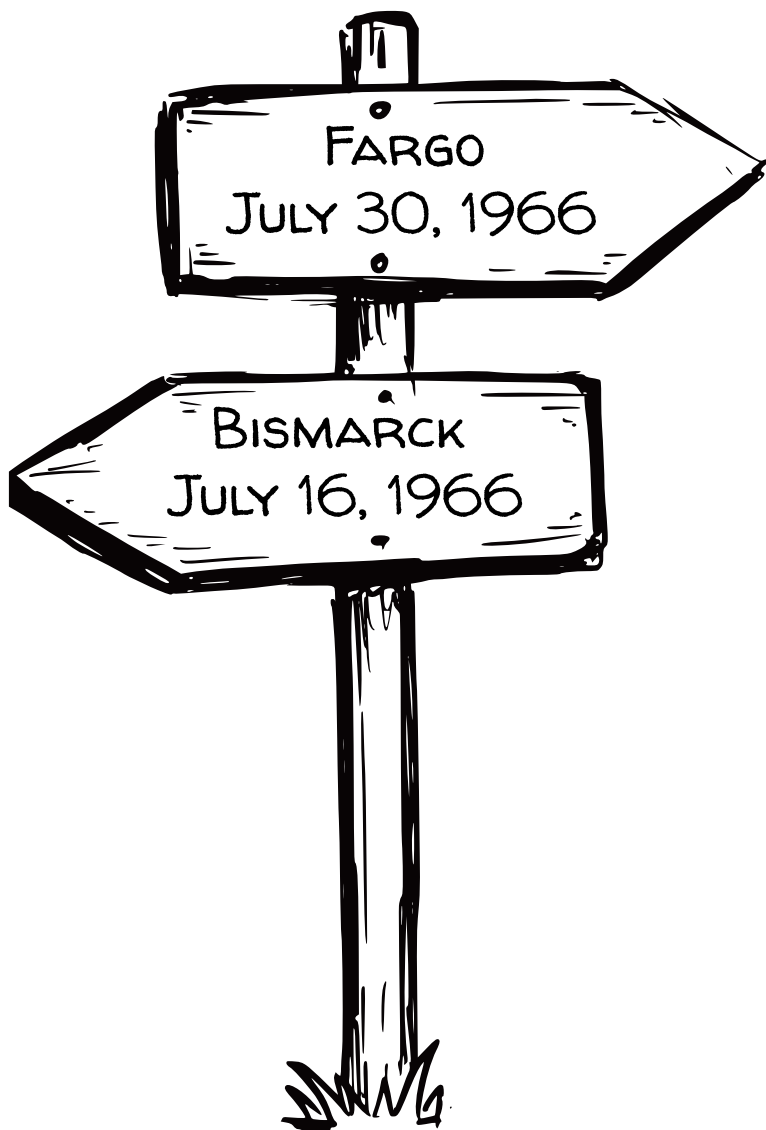


60th Anniversary

1966 - 2026



"Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls."

Jeremiah 6:16



WELCOME FROM ALL OF US

**The Pioneer Members, Present Members,
Elders and Pastors**

of

The Church of God

North Dakota Congregations

**Commemorating Our
60th Anniversary
*July 1966 – July 2026***

OUR PASTORS



Bismarck

Lowell Blackwell

- 1966-1971

Wayne Lugenbill (*interim*)

- 1971-1972

John Cafourek

- 1972-1976

Dan Creed

- 1976-1985

Jeff Barnes

- 1985-1989

Paul Luecke

- 1989-2003

Herb Teitgen

- 2003-2020

Ken Skorseth (*interim*)

- 2020-2023

Nick Lamoureux

- 2022-Present

Fargo

Lowell Blackwell

- 1966-1971

Wayne Lugenbill

- 1971-1978

Hugh Wilson

- 1978-1986

Mike Blackwell

- 1986-1991

Paul Luecke

- 1991-2003

Herb Teitgen

- 2003-2020

Ken Skorseth (*interim*)

- 2020-2023

Nick Lamoureux

- 2022-Present

EARLY HISTORY OF THE NORTH DAKOTA CHURCHES

*(The following historical narrative was recorded and recounted
during the 25th Anniversary celebration.)*

The story of the North Dakota churches begins several years before a minister was sent out and regular meetings began. For some in the Dakotas, the mid-1950's was the beginning of a new life — as some of our early North Dakota members were baptized into the “Radio Church of God” (which was the name of the church at that time).

Only those who were baptized at the same time and in the same location knew each other. These few scattered members had little idea that there were others with similar beliefs anywhere near.

Attending the Feast of Tabernacles in Big Sandy, Texas was an opportunity for the scattered brethren to get to know each other. The Day of Atonement was observed on the way to the Feast in Texas.

Coming back to North Dakota from the Feast of Tabernacles meant many weekends of either keeping the Sabbath alone, or with only immediate family members. Members were so hungry for fellowship that they began getting together just for the opportunity to have a picnic, or a shared meal to discuss their new-found truths. As many as 50 people attended these informal get-togethers in the years before there was a church or Bible Study.

The first holy day kept in North Dakota was the Feast of Trumpets in 1961, at the Jamestown Park. But there were no weekly Sabbath services in the whole upper Midwest until the Minneapolis church began in September, 1963.

We now continue with the history of the Bismarck and Fargo churches as they both came to be...

HISTORY OF THE BISMARCK CONGREGATION



The first members in North Dakota were baptized in the 1950's. Among these early members were: Mr. and Mrs. Carl Mauk, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Spitzer, Mr. Knut Knutson, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Shulte, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Lang, Mr. and Mrs. Gottlieb Schaeffer, the Rudy Mettler family, Mr. and Mrs. Ron Schueller, the Hints family, and Phyllis Hederely. Many of these members, along with others, attended informal get-togethers in the years before there was a church or Bible Study in North Dakota.

Then came the day when the letter arrived in each of their homes, inviting them to meet in Bismarck for a Bible Study with one of God's ministers. This first meeting was in February 1964. There were 113 eager faces with alert minds trying catch every word of what was said during that first formal Bible Study. Brethren were able to ask questions and get answers right from the Bible. They were able to hear the plain truth, which was so refreshing that many could hardly wait to go out and tell their friends, relatives and neighbors. Many had to be counseled to let their light shine by their deeds, rather than by attempting to convert loved ones. This first Bible study was held in the World War Memorial building in Bismarck. Bible studies continued through the next two and one-half years, later being held at the Grand Pacific Hotel.

The first wedding in North Dakota of members of God's church was on August 1, 1965...with the marriage of Karen Fricke to Ray Daly. This wedding was held at the Grand Pacific Hotel.

Many of the brethren during these years were farmers, ranchers, or dairy people. Those who milked cows had difficulty maintaining the demands of their dairy operations while keeping the Sabbath properly. So, some began to look around for alternative occupations. Since there was no certainty of a church starting in Bismarck at that time, many members sold their farms and moved to the Minneapolis area, where a church there had started in 1963.

As many as 50-60 brethren left the Bismarck Bible Study group in this time period — although it seemed someone new would always be called to fill the vacant seats.

Sunday, July 3, 1966 was the last Bible study prior to the starting of the Bismarck church. Ninety-nine people were in attendance at that study. July 8, 1966 was the date on the letter from Mr. Herbert Armstrong informing members that a church was starting in Bismarck.

That first Sabbath service was held July 16, 1966 at 3:00 p.m., at the Bismarck Moose Lodge on Railroad Ave. The attendance was 121. Mr. Lowell Blackwell conducted this first service. Notes show that the very next day the brethren got together once again for a skating party social.

In these early Sabbath services Mr. Blackwell led the song service, did all the speaking, and gave the opening and closing prayers. It soon became evident that help was needed to serve the many needs of the church.

Mr. Ron Fricke and Mr. Paul Lang were appointed to help take care of the many details involved in holding Bible studies and church services. Several men from the congregation were surprised to be called on for opening or closing prayers...and then for song leading and later, to give sermonettes.

Spokesman Club was then started to help prepare men for leadership roles. November 1, 1966 was the first Spokesman Club meeting in Bismarck. It was held at the old Capitol Electric building at 7:00 p.m. The club met every Tuesday evening thereafter.

In April 1967 — nine months after the church was started — Mr. Ron Fricke was ordained the first deacon in the Bismarck congregation. Later, in June of 1967, Mr. Barry Chase was sent out to assist Mr. Blackwell for the next year. Throughout these early years of the church in North Dakota, Mr. Blackwell was also pastoring the Fargo church on the other side of the state, resulting in a great deal of travel and being apart from his family. Mr. and Mrs. Ben Morrison

were sent to assist Mr. Blackwell for a short period of time in 1968 and 1969.

One attendance report during these early years showed Bismarck with about 140 in attendance. Eventually, the growth in Fargo began to increase rapidly. It was then that Mr. Blackwell and his family moved to Castleton, North Dakota, and in July 1969, Mr. Wayne Lugenbill was sent to Bismarck to assist the church and members in the western half of the state.

During these early years of the church in North Dakota, the Fargo and Bismarck congregations always met together for the annual holy days, as well as for many other church activities such as Spokesman Club meetings, softball games and campouts. Many long-lasting friendships were cemented during this time by spending these precious moments together as well as in each other's homes.

In April 1970, Mr. Joe Stoebner was ordained a deacon, and Mrs. Darlene Daly was ordained deaconess to help with the increasing physical needs of the Bismarck church.

In 1972, when Mr. Lowell Blackwell and his family were transferred from the Fargo area, Mr. Lugenbill went to Fargo and Mr. and Mrs. John Cafourek and family were sent to Bismarck to begin serving the Bismarck congregation.

The Spokesman Club and other church activities flourished throughout these years. The Bismarck men's basketball team even played in tournaments in Sioux Falls, South Dakota and Omaha, Nebraska...and won! Determination and North Dakota resolve proved that despite being small in number, they were mighty in spirit.

Mr. Joe Stoebner was ordained a local church elder in June 1975. At the same time, Mr. and Mrs. George Kulish were ordained as deacon and deaconess to help with the growth and workload in the Bismarck church.

Mr. Cafourek and family were transferred to Missouri in 1976, after

being in the Bismarck area for about four years. At that time Mr. and Mrs. Dan Creed were sent to Bismarck to serve the brethren and to continue building on the foundation set down by previous ministers.

Mr. Jerry Helt was ordained a deacon in 1978. Mr. Burt Daly was ordained a deacon in 1980, and at the same time Mr. Helt was ordained a local church elder. Mr. Ron Fricke was ordained a local church elder in 1985...some 19 years after he helped with the starting of the church in 1966.

In 1985 Mr. Creed and family were transferred to Illinois, after having spent nine years in Bismarck. Mr. Jeff Barness then became the next pastor of the Bismarck church — as well as the Minot and Dickinson churches, which had been raised up in the meantime.

In 1989 — at about the same time North Dakota was celebrating its 100th birthday as a state — Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Barness and family were transferred to New York. At that time, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Luecke arrived to take their place.

HISTORY OF THE FARGO CONGREGATION



Faithful members from eastern North Dakota and South Dakota and northwest Minnesota were overjoyed to receive a hand printed letter from Mr. Lowell Blackwell...announcing that the first Sabbath service was to be held in Fargo, North Dakota on July 30, 1966, at the Fargo American Legion Club.

Formerly, some of our members — who were baptized by baptizing teams sent out from Pasadena in the late 1950's and early 1960's — had to travel to Chicago for the Passover, where they remained through the Days of Unleavened Bread.

After September 1963, when the Minneapolis, Minnesota church began, those members who lived in the eastern sections of North Dakota and South Dakota and Minnesota began attending in Minneapolis whenever possible.

So, to finally have a “local” church begin was a real blessing, even though Fargo was over 100 miles away from some member's homes. Eighty-five people attended that first service in Fargo. It was the first church of God service that many had ever attended.

Fargo's first pastor, Mr. Lowell Blackwell, did everything in these early services...the song leading, opening and closing prayers, announcements, the sermon and then answering questions afterward. But that soon changed, as Mr. Gary Wendt was “volunteered” to lead songs.

Fargo's first Holy day service was the Feast of Trumpets, 1966. This was a combined service at Bismarck, with 152 people present and a total holy day offering of \$530.32.

On March 25, 1967, the Fargo church moved across the river to the Moorhead American Legion — a hall which was more private and with better parking, but colder in winter and hotter in summer.

On April 1, 1967, the Fargo Spokesman Club began, with members coming from three states to be a part. Later that month, on April 15, the Fargo church saw its first ordinations...those of Mr. Robert Berg and Mr. Gary Wendt being ordained as deacons.

The Last Day of Unleavened Bread in 1967 was to be held at Bismarck...but typical of North Dakota's weather, over a foot of snow reduced any driving in Bismarck to four-wheel-drive vehicles...so the church in North Dakota had to stay holed up on that Holy Day.

In February 1968, the first two deaconesses were ordained: Mrs. Huddelia Stutzman and Mrs. JoAnne Wendt. In April 1968, Mr. Robert Berg was ordained a local church elder — a little over a month after giving his first sermonette.

By 1968 the areas had grown to the point that in June of that year Mr. Lowell Blackwell was sent an assistant to help. In November 1968, Mr. Blackwell and his family moved from their home in Mandan to Castleton.

During the winter of 1969, Mr. Blackwell and Mr. Ben Morrison were caught in a blinding blizzard on I-94. They had to stop because the interstate was blocked by two semi-trucks. They were then hit by another semi from behind and had a long cold night waiting rescue the next day.

The first wedding in the Fargo church took place in March 1969 when Alice Howey married Art Schaffer of Bismarck.

April 1970 saw more ordinations. Mr. Charles Hanson and Mr. Richard Wagner were ordained deacons. In June 1970, Mr. Gary Castle became Mr. Blackwell's assistant.

The Day of Atonement in 1970 was our first service in the Fargo Eagle's Club...where we have met except for one year ever since.

June 19, 1971, was the farewell Sabbath for our first pastor...as the Lowell Blackwell's were moving on to Ohio. Mr. Wayne Lugenbill became pastor June 26, 1971. Shortly afterward the Fargo and

Bismarck churches ended their joint relationship.

Fargo's assigned Feast of Tabernacles site in 1972 was at the new church-owned site of Wisconsin Dells.

On the last Holy Day of Unleavened Bread of 1975, Mr. Andrew Freeman was ordained a deacon. During the Days of Unleavened Bread a year later, Mr. Kirk McDonald was ordained a deacon.

On July 22, 1978, we welcomed our third pastor, Mr. Hugh Wilson and his family. The north country presented quite a change from New Orleans, where Mr. Wilson and his family had come from.

As the church went through a time of turbulence in the late 1970's Mr. Wilson helped keep the impact on the Fargo Congregation to a minimum. Several visits from headquarters ministers including Mr. Carl McNair, Mr. Waterhouse, and Mr. Dean Blackwell also helped greatly with this.

The Feast of Trumpets, 1980, saw the ordination of another local church elder — Mr. John Hillerson. During the early 1980's we enjoyed a variety of activities including float trips, costume balls, spring formal dances, etc.

The 15th anniversary of the Fargo church was celebrated on August 1, 1986. Mr. Dean Blackwell was guest speaker. On October 12 of that year the Fargo church went to Minneapolis to hear Mr. Herbert Armstrong.

In February 1989, we had one of the worst blizzards to ever hit... and it came on a Sabbath. The day began comparatively pleasant and Sabbath services were well attended. But by the time services had ended, the wind was whipping the snow into a full blizzard. Several members attempted to get home and ended up stranded in various locations. A large number ended up sleeping in the lobby of the Holiday Inn, and about one-third of the congregation rode out the storm at the Eagle's Club.

In June 1986, the Fargo congregation bade farewell to Mr. Wilson

and his family, and welcomed our fourth pastor, Mr. Mike Blackwell and his family.

Beginning in 1986 Fargo became a center for Y.O.U. activities for the North and South Dakota Y.O.U. district. Many functions revolved around these Y.O.U. family weekends.

On June 27, 1987, Mr. Tkach visited Winnipeg and many people from Grand Forks and Fargo made the trip to hear him speak.

On Feast of Trumpets, 1988, Mr. Charles Hanson became the first blind elder in this era of God's church. During the Days of Unleavened Bread in 1990, Fargo welcomed its newest deacon — Mr. Duane Keller.

Over the years, the Fargo church has had many visiting speakers from headquarters, including visits from Mr. Richard Ames, Dr. Donald Ward, Mr. Harold Jackson, Dr. Clint Ziomerma, Mr. Dean Blackwell, Mr. Leroy Neff, Mr. Dennis Luker, Mr. Carl McNair, and Dr. Dave Albert.



July 31, 1892 - January 16, 1986

The above historical narrative of Church of God history concludes with a dedication to the memory of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong — but the story doesn't end there...

In 1989, the Bismarck and Minot congregations were assigned to Mr. Paul Luecke, and Fargo was added to his circuit in 1991. Over the next twelve years, Mr. Luecke served the North Dakota congregations through a period that included several instances of organizational upheaval and transition. In 2003, he was succeeded by Mr. Herb Teitgen.

A SUMMARY OF “RECENT” CHURCH HISTORY



From 2003 to 2020, the Work of God’s Church in North Dakota continued in a steady, faithful, and deeply personal way. The congregations were not large by worldly standards, and the brethren were often scattered across many miles, but the Eternal continued to provide spiritual food, Sabbath fellowship, Holy Day gatherings, pastoral care, and opportunities for service. This period was marked by the long and dedicated service of Mr. Teitgen, who faithfully served the North Dakota congregations for many years.

Under Mr. Teitgen’s care, the North Dakota churches continued to “*contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*” (**Jude 3**). Week after week, the brethren gathered for Sabbath services, served and encouraged one another, welcomed visitors, supported scattered members, and maintained the precious truths God had given them. Much of the Work during these years was quiet and personal, but the household of God continued its steady rhythm of worshiping the Father “*in spirit and truth*” (**John 4:24**).

In 2020, another significant transition came unexpectedly when Mr. Teitgen died. His death was deeply felt by the brethren, and it marked the end of a long and meaningful chapter in the history of God’s Church in North Dakota. Yet even in that difficult moment, God continued to care for His people. Mr. Ken Skorseth stepped forward in selfless service — volunteering to serve as interim pastor and helping provide steadiness and encouragement during a time of sudden change.

That same year also brought the unusual challenges of COVID-19. Normal patterns of fellowship and worship were disrupted, but the Work of God did not stop. To offset the disruption, Mr. Skorseth began hosting bi-weekly virtual Bible studies to help scattered members stay connected, encouraged, and spiritually fed. Those studies continue to the present and regularly include around seventy participants.

In 2022, Mr. Nick Lamoureux and his family were transferred to North Dakota from Georgia, where he filled the role of associate pastor to Mr. Skorseth. In 2023 their roles were reversed, and the North Dakota congregations were assigned to Mr. Lamoureux, along with those in Watertown and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Then, in February 2025, Rapid City was added to the circuit, bringing the entire Dakota territory under one pastoral administration. Mr. Skorseth — along with the support of his wife, Dianne — continues to faithfully assist in the Work as associate pastor.

During these last few years, the Feast of Tabernacles has once again been observed in the Black Hills region: in both Sturgis and Rapid City. These Festival seasons have provided meaningful opportunities for brethren to rejoice before God, renew friendships, serve together, and remember the coming Kingdom of God. The years since 2020 have been filled with many happy memories, but they aren't without challenges.

The Church has continued to feel the effects of past divisions. Beloved members have aged, moved away, or finished their race. Families have changed, congregations have changed, and the once-familiar pattern of society now seems to have changed. Yet throughout these various “new chapters,” God Almighty has not abandoned His people! The Sabbath is still honored, the Holy Days are still observed, the *GOOD NEWS* of the Kingdom is still preached, and the disciples of Jesus Christ still gather before God with hope and still look forward to the return of Jesus Christ.

Much of the Work during these years hasn't been headline-making, but it has been meaningful. In many ways, it has been a period of spiritual refinement for the people of God. Paul reminds the Church in **Eph. 4:15-16** that spiritual maturity requires both **truth** and **love**. It's not enough to simply *know* the truth in theory, and the Creator is helping His people *live* it in practice — with humility, patience, courage, faithfulness, and genuine care for one another.

To a certain degree, it's inevitable that this chapter of North Dakota Church history should make us feel nostalgic, yet it should also make us thankful and *ZEALOUS* for what lies ahead...

The same God who sustained His people in the past still sustains His people today. He is faithful. He is still able to work “*all things together for good to those who love God*” (**Rom. 8:28**). He still instructs His servants, “*Be strong and of good courage*” (**Josh. 1:9**). And like Scripture tells us in **Phil. 1:6**, He who has begun a good work in His people will be *FAITHFUL TO COMPLETE IT!* The same calling and truth remains, the same Kingdom is coming, and the same opportunity remains before us: to hold fast, to serve faithfully, to encourage one another, and to continue pressing “*toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*” (**Phil. 3:14**).

It is our great pleasure to welcome you all — the faithful brothers and sisters of God’s church, back for our 60th anniversary celebration!

NORTH DAKOTA CHURCHES

60TH ANNIVERSARY

Saturday, July 25, 2026

at

Marillac Manor
1016 N 28th St
Bismarck, ND 58501

ORDER OF SERVICES

SONG LEADER: Mr. Bryan Van Orman

SERMONETTE: Mr. Nick Lamoureux

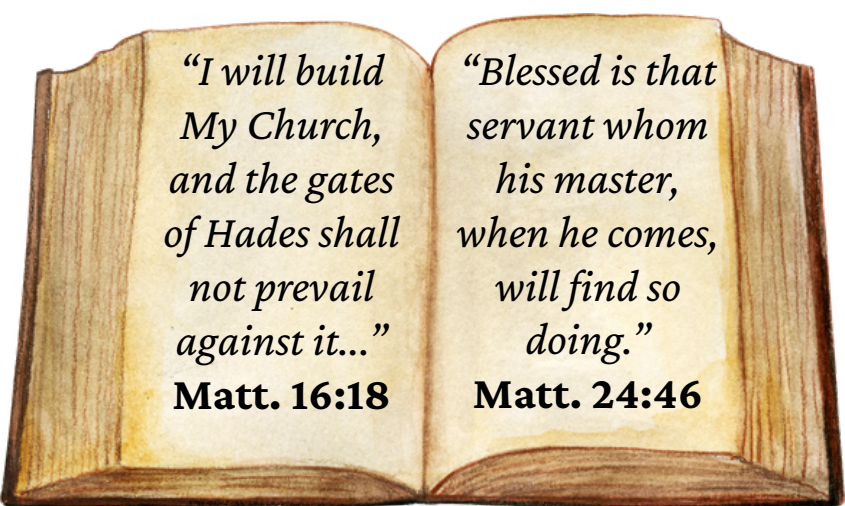
ANNOUNCEMENTS: Mr. Nick Lamoureux

SPECIAL MUSIC: “Hallelujah” by *Vision Children’s Choir*

SERMON: Mr. Monte Knudson

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[illegible]

An open book with two pages of text. The pages are aged and yellowed, with a dark brown cover visible around the edges. The text is written in a black, serif font. The left page contains a quote and a reference, while the right page contains another quote and a reference.

*"I will build
My Church,
and the gates
of Hades shall
not prevail
against it..."*

Matt. 16:18

*"Blessed is that
servant whom
his master,
when he comes,
will find so
doing."*

Matt. 24:46