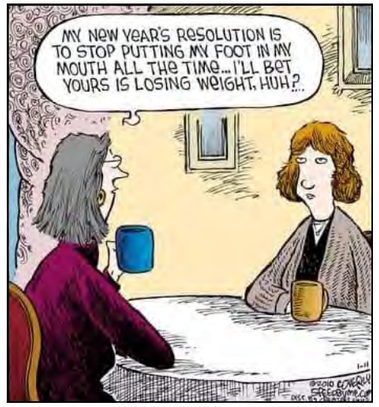

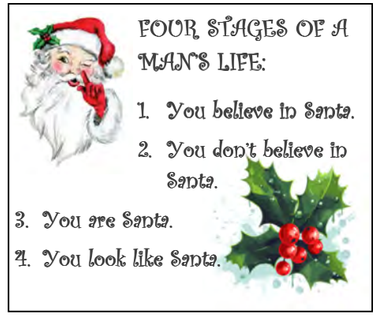

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Rachel Ray's Super Nachos

Ingredients

2 bags corn tortilla chips in 2 colors/different flavors

Pico de Gallo Salsa

- 4 vine ripe tomatoes, seeded and chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and finely chopped, for medium to hot heat level
- 1 small white onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup, 2 handfuls, cilantro leaves, finely chopped -- substitute parsley, if cilantro is not to your liking
- Salt

Beef and Beans Topping

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 pound ground sirloin
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dark chili powder
- 1 1/2 ground cumin, half a palmful
- 2 teaspoons to 1 tablespoon cayenne pepper sauce, giving you medium to hot heat level
- 1 can black beans, 15 ounces, drained

Cheese Sauce

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 cups milk
- 3/4 pound pepper jack cheese, shredded, about 2 1/2 cups

Optional Toppings

Sour cream, chopped scallions, chopped black olives, diced pimento, sliced avocado, dressed with lemon juice, hot pepper sauces to taste.

DIRECTIONS

- Arrange a mixture of 2 varieties of corn chips on a very large platter or broiler pan as a platter.
- Combine salsa ingredients in a bowl and set aside for flavors to marry.
- Heat a medium nonstick skillet over medium high heat. Add oil, garlic, onion and peppers to the pan and saute 2 minutes, then add meat and crumble with wooden spoon. Season meat with salt, chili powder, cumin and cayenne pepper sauce. Cook meat 5 minutes, then stir in beans and reduce heat to low.
- In a medium sauce pot, melt butter and add flour to it. Cook flour and butter 1 to 2 minutes over moderate heat, then whisk in milk. When milk comes to a bubble, stir in cheese with a wooden spoon. Remove cheese sauce from the heat.
- Pour cheese sauce evenly over the massive spread of chips and top evenly with beef and beans and the pico de gallo. UBER NACHOS! Serve immediately as is or, garnish with your choice of extra toppings from the toppings list.

Watch Rachel Ray make this recipe at: https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/rachael-ray/super-nachos-recipe-1914057

News from the Neighborhood

Volume 11, Issue 2 Hankinson, North Dakota Fall/Winter 2023

Sister Mary Louise, at the Heart of St. Gerard's for Five Decades

If you ever developed a relationship with Sister Mary Louise Jundt, you developed a relationship with St. Gerard's. She was the face of St. Gerard's for many and cherished her work in the delivery of Catholic health care since long before St. Gerard's Hospital transitioned into St. Gerard's Community of Care back in September, 1993.

Serving as the Provincial Superior of the Sisters of St. Francis and President of the governing board from 1969-1988, Sister Mary Louise guided St. Gerard's through many challenges faced by rural health care ministries. Following her last term as Provincial, she became an effective Assistant Administrator during Sister Rose Marie Freund's years, until her death in May, 2005.

Sister Mary Louise remained in that office until recently, always passionately working for the concerns of St. Gerard's. Bringing Christ to every encounter, Sister pursued her service to others in visits with residents, families and staff, praying with the sick and dying, and at governing board meetings. By numerous trips to Bismarck for ND Long Term Care conferences and events with ND governors and legislators, Sister became a familiar face at the State Capital.

A formidable proponent of life at all stages, Sister Mary Louise was a visible presence and voice for the unborn as well. During her years in leadership, she and many Sisters were active in prolife events across North Dakota; for decades she prayerfully marched at the abortion chambers in Fargo, Jamestown and Grand Forks.

Her greatest focus in recent years was fundraising for St. Gerard's. After Dakota Medical Foundation established *Giving Hearts Day* (GHD)in 2008, early visits with Pat Traynor, the foundations Executive Director, inspired Sister to pursue the good of our mission as its Development Director. Participating in GHD since 2008, she spent thousands of hours hand-writing personal thank you notes to donors for their generous donations. In 2023, her 72nd year of Religious Life, she had no plans to stop.

That changed for Sister Mary Louise, though, with the long and bitterly cold winter. Failing health and the weather dictated that she bring her office home to the convent. Submitting to God's will, she continued to reach out with letters and her prayers for all as long as God gave her breath. Her remarkable long life of service ended quietly at St. Francis Convent the afternoon of July 4th. Her tenacious faith and fortitude testified to her profound trust in and love for Jesus Christ and others.

Through her family Sister Mary Louise met many people in North Dakota and across the country who became supporters of St. Gerard's after learning of the our good reputation in long term care. Sister Mary Louise was grateful for each donor. She made them known by name to everyone at St. Gerard's and to the Sisters, asking prayers for each one.

All of us at St. Gerard's thank God for Sister's incredible contributions to our mission, and now trust in her continued prayers for God's guidance and providence as we move forward in these still challenging times. The ever-changing hurdles long term care facilities face are surmountable only with God's grace. We will follow her lead in the wake of her unfailing trust and faith — her most profound legacy to us all. ~ *Sister Donna Welder, OSF ~ Pres. St. Gerard's Board*

Conetta & Rebecca talking the day over...it is so nice when we see staff taking time like this for the important things that matter to our residents.

North Dakota nursing homes continue facing staffing crisis and other challenges; many have closed.

The last few years have been a very challenging time for all of us, especially those caring for the elderly in nursing homes and other long term care facilities. And, now, there is a proposal underway to require around-the-clock staffing by a registered nurse in skilled nursing facilities. This proposed CMS regulation would make things very difficult for the many nursing homes already struggling to employ adequate staff. As it is now, we are required to have an RN scheduled at least 8 hours out of each 24 hour day, and our DON or ADON are always on call and just minutes away, if needed.

The stress and hard work involved in caring for residents, especially during the pandemic, has taken its toll. Facilities in the state lost about 15% of their workers during that time. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of nursing home staff declined by 210,000 in the last three years in the U.S. Many have not returned. North Dakota facilities are still struggling to hire and keep enough staff to care for their residents. The required evening and weekend availability also makes it hard for long term care facilities to compete with other healthcare institutions as many would prefer to work a "nine to five" shift, with weekends off.

North Dakota facilities also face a disadvantage in attracting staff from other states and countries in that our winters are so harsh and unappealing to those used to warmer climates.

One tactic some have tried is paying higher wages, but with limited financial resources, this isn't an option for everyone, either.

Many people do not stay at a job longer than six months, and facilities need to frequently hire replacements.

To find adequate staff to care for their residents, most North Dakota nursing homes are forced to hire workers from agencies, costing them about 25% more than they would otherwise need to pay employees hired directly from the area. When doubled with rising wages and inflation across the board, it isn't hard to see why many long term care facilities are struggling financially.

For a time, during the COVID-era, government funds were awarded to many facilities, which helped them face the all-too-common financial strains in the industry, but now, as funding is not as plentiful, one can expect the dire situation only to continue and even worsen.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, five North Dakota nursing homes have closed due to staffing and financial challenges. Another facility is slated to dissolve in the near future. Others around the state are struggling as well. Nationwide, almost 700 skilled nursing facilities have closed since 2020. One of these is the Good Samaritan Nursing Home in Mott, (southwestern North Dakota).

These closures have not only posed difficulties for the elderly who resided there, but also for their families. In rural environments, such as Mott, adult children may have to drive many miles, even across the state, to visit their loved ones. Like countless other facilities, difficulty in recruiting staff and keeping their census up led to Mott's home closing its doors.

Even before the pandemic, rural communities lagged behind in access to long term care. The loss of facilities in communities such as Mott also constitutes an economic blow to the community, depriving it of a major industry and related businesses and traffic. As families in small communities travel more to larger cities to visit loved ones, the local economies, inevitably, will be harmed as people do more shopping and other business elsewhere.

Even though we're seeing closures, it's not as if the need for eldercare were waning. The state's population is, in fact, aging. Currently, about 15% of North Dakotans are over 65, and over 30% are in their 60s. Not only does this mean more people to care for, but also that more and more people are entering retirement age and will no longer be serving as healthcare providers.

Another trend making things difficult is that individuals who come to nursing homes today tend to be more needy and suffer from more serious issues than in times past. This may be because people are living longer and are staying at home longer.

Please continue to pray for the well-being of St. Gerard's because we desperately want to continue "*Serving All in Jesus' Name*."

Jill Foertsch, Admin.

Information taken from Carrie McDermott's November 4th article in the Grand Forks Herald and from an October 11th article in Bloomerang Business week by Lauren Coleman-Lochner and Martin Z Braun

"The moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. – W.H. Murray, Mountaineer

FEBRUARY 8 GIVING HEARTS DAY

KEEPING THE NEIGHBORHOOD WHOLE.

Giving Hearts Day is the biggest fund-raising event of the year across North Dakota, and for us these funds are essential to our mission.

This is the one time per year that your money goes right where it is needed the most – and offers St. Gerard's Community of Care to also have chance of enhancing those donations by Matching Funds pledged to us ahead of time. We have already been chosen to receive a $3000 Match by Dakota Medical Foundation.

Why might I want to donate to St. Gerard's Community of Care on Giving Hearts Day?

- 100% of my donation will stay local – right where it is needed the most.
- I want to help support the non- profit in our community or nearby community family and friends rely on.
- I like to help vulnerable people.
- It meant a lot to my family that my parents (grandparents) spent the last of their days at St. Gerard's and I want to see it continue.
- I feel St. Gerard's is a major part of our community and want to help support it.
- I like the idea of having a Christian place for my loved one(s) when long term care becomes a need in our family.
- If I no longer can live in my home, I would like to reside in Independent Living.
- I love the Childcare program that they have.
- I have sent my children to Pre-school there.
- I don't want to happen in Hankinson what happened to Mott, when their home closed.

Rural North Dakota Nursing Homes struggle year round to meet the costs of providing care for our family members and friends. Please consider increasing your contribution over your past year's budgets. Please even consider doubling your gifts to help combat State funding that is always behind, insurance delays and denials, and accounts in default. Nursing homes are on the front lines of elder care, but are the last to be paid. Please be as generous as possible so we can stay here for you, and you can stay home, near your family and friends.

- I love onsite access to OSPTI & Hank. Dental!

St. Gerard's will put your donation to work making a safe, friendly environment for your loved ones.

GHD 2024 on February 8th will provide:

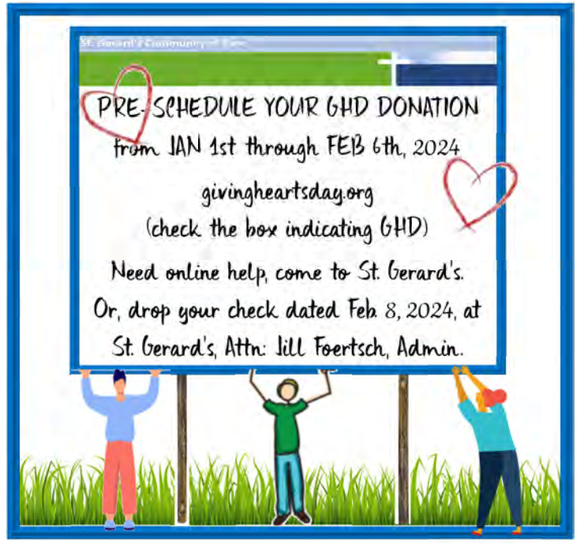
- Updated Security System
- New Whirlpool Tub

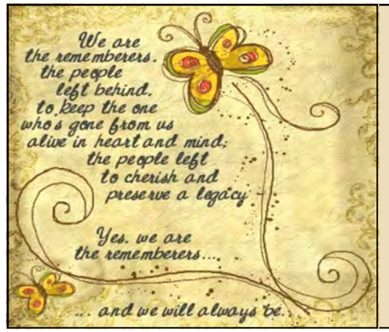
Needs We See on the Horizon:

- Walk in Freezer
- Outdoor Playground Mat
- LED Lights in Resident Rooms
- Updated Call Light System

Wish List:

- Local Nurses & CNA's to Fill Open Position
- Enclosed Pick-Up & Drop-Off Drive Way





Remembering those God called home in the last year:

Marion Bartells, Darrell Ceroll, Rita Ehrens, Barb Fryer,
Patricia Green, Joan Gunnarson, Nancy Hayes, Donald Leinen,
Florence Mitzel, Anni Nelson, Elaine Oster, Beverly Ranuva,
Doris Riemann, Father Edward Sherman,
Mavis Stibal, Lorraine Stiles, Charles Struck, Orvin Ulstad

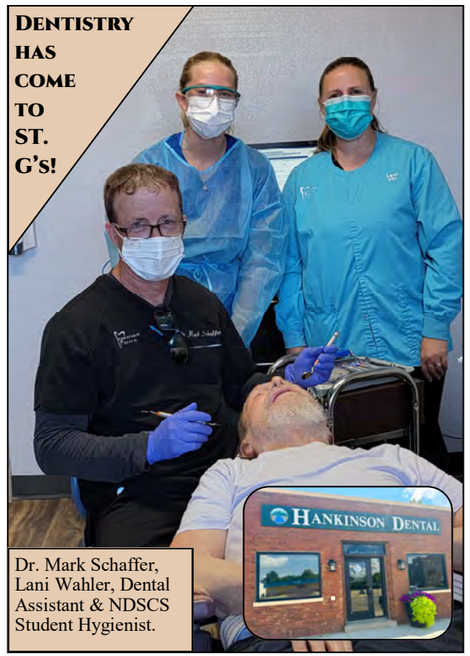
Rest in His Perfect Peace, Dear Friends & Neighbors.

Last Supper in Loving Memory of Mavis

In November, the family of Mavis Stibal**,** gifted St. Gerard's with a beautiful wood relief of the Last Supper in her memory. It will soon be mounted on the front of the altar in our chapel, hopefully before Christmas. Mavis' son, Curtis Stibal, created the piece and it was delivered by his siblings Vione Jordheim, Linda Bartnick, and LaVonne and Harley Guenther.

Msgr. Brian Donahue blessed the art, making it a sacramental from now on. Sacramentals point us to God's grace and make it present to us in some way. Blessings invite God to be with us as we make our pilgrimage through this world.

May this memorial to Mavis be a another rich channel of grace and inspiration for all who pray in our chapel.



Dr. Mark Schaffer, Lani Wahler, Dental Assistant & NDSCS Student Hygienist.

Dr. Mark Schaffer, Hankinson Dental, Instrumental in Obtaining Clinic Site for Residents of St. Gerard's Community of Care

It has taken a while, but St. Gerard's Community of Care (SGCC) now boasts that it has a dental room where residents may have their teeth cleaned right at home. SGCC, in collaboration with Hankinson Dental, NDSCS Dental Program and the North Dakota Dental Foundation, has obtained onsite dental care equipment, making it easier for our residents to have regular oral checkups including x-rays, education on good oral hygiene and a consultation with Dr. Schaffer.

Dental hygiene students from NDSCS, provide care under the direct supervision of Lani Wahler, Dental Assistant at Hankinson Dental . If further treatment is recommended, a plan is then devised for residents to be taken to Hankinson Dental, just a few minutes away.

A room in our Independent Living Unit has been made available; dental furniture, an x-ray machine, plumbing updates and a computer connected to the Hankinson Dental network are already in use. Dental Hygiene students come weekly, bringing their own sterile tools that are used for the patient they have that day.

Terry Bladow shared, *"When I began working at St. Gerard's in 1992, most of our elderly had dentures at that time, so the upkeep was minimal. Now, with most people practicing regular cleanings and checkups, most people have their own teeth, and they wish to maintain their oral habits. We are so pleased to have this partnership with key people."*

Dr. Schaffer continues to make mandatory nursing home visits twice per year. St. Gerard's is likely the only facility in ND to offer professional in-house dental care, of which we are super proud! NDSCS Dental Department has been great to work with, as has the North Dakota Dental Foundation and Dr. Schaffer and his staff, in making this dream a reality!

Histories About to Meet at St. Gerard's by the Hands of an Artist

Two years ago, during the *Year of St. Joseph*, we lost our large statue of this beloved Saint when it was shattered in a sad accident in our Chapel. Irreparable, the pieces were buried in the grave of Sister Edwardine Gerou. It is customary to burn or bury sacred items (sacramentals) when they can no longer be used, so an unknown number of the graves of our Sisters hold precious little articles like medals, scapular badges, holy cards, prayer books, and now an entire statue of St. Joseph.

At some point in 2022-2023, Father Damien Schill, a Priest of the Fargo Diocese, became aware that the Sisters were looking for a statue of St. Joseph. He knew of a very special one in storage at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church, Mt. Carmel, ND, now a *Chapel of Ease.* Father Schill contacted Father Curtis Gunwall, pastor at Langdon who also administers the Mt. Carmel church. Father Schill, raised at Mt. Carmel, asked Father Gunwall to consider donating the statue of St. Joseph to the Sisters here in Hankinson for St. Gerard's Chapel. He considered the statue (which was in the original 1889 church) to be still in good shape, though it would need restoring. Father Schill also thought St. Gerard's would be a fitting home for it where the faithful can venerate this saint and seek his intercession for themselves and others.

Mt. Carmel is a special place in the history of our Franciscan Sisters. Sister Diana Hell, Sister Rebecca Metzger and Sister Carmelita Sauer all were raised there on family farms and grew in faith at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish. Sister Carmelita and Sister Diana both served at St. Gerard's—Sister Diana for thirty years. All of them had a great devotion to St. Joseph and depended on his prayers for the sick and dying during their decades of work at St. Gerard's Hospital, Towner County Hospital (Cando), St. Elizabeth's Hospital (Drayton) and St. Anne's Guest Home (Grand Forks). All of them would be so pleased to see this melding of histories today.

After discussing the request with board members and some of the families still associated by legacy to the former parish of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Father Gunwall let the Sisters know that they could have the statue for St. Gerard's. With no small effort, on October 25th, Jeremy Sauer of Mt. Carmel, helped Father Gunwall bring St. Joseph out of storage, down a tight spiral staircase and, finally, to rest in the back of the Sisters' car. Cringing, the Sister about to chauffeur St. Joseph for the next five hours, watched Father Gunwall navigate backwards holding the base of the statue through four doors from the choir loft and down the narrow staircase of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church.

Ten days and a lengthy phone conversation later, Dennis Narlock of Reynolds, ND, arrived at the convent to pick up the statue. Dennis has restored scores of statues over the last ten years and some of his work is in the chapel at St. Anne's Guest Home in Grand Forks. His knowledge of liturgical art and the materials used in statues as old as the Mt. Carmel St. Joseph is impressive.

Dennis told us that the statue of St. Joseph is a rare one because the Christ Child he is holding has his eyes closed, as if asleep. "You don't often find them," he said — another reason the Sisters are happy to restore it for the edification of the faithful for generations to come. Beauty and art go far in faith formation, inspiration, and consolation when we are troubled.

After Dennis inspected the statue of St. Joseph, he was shown others at the convent. He will also do a major restoration on the Blessed Mother pictured with him at right. We believe she came to the Sisters from the Althoff family. Sister Angeline Althoff was the first American to enter the Sisters' then 688-year-old international congregation on Jan. 10, 1929. She was the daughter of John and Lena (Martini) Althoff, Mooreton, ND, and had to enter the building on planks leading to the front entrance as steps had not yet been added to the newly constructed St. Francis Academy and Convent.

Dennis says both statues will need a lengthy process to rehydrate the plaster before repairing and repainting the external surfaces. Additionally, Dennis will do lesser restorations on the Blessed Mother at St. Gerard's and another St. Joseph at the convent. His plan is for the statues to be completed by Holy Week of 2024.

AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Team Work is the only way!

Karen, our Business Office Manager…looking at the piles on her desk, do you think she has enough to do?

Heather is in charge of scheduling our Nursing Dept., not an easy job!

Aaron, we just about see a smile there. :-)

John, Shelly, Cindy, Shirley and Doris, after a weekday Communion Service. We have such a nice little congregation that comes together most days to pray and receive Holy Communion, for Masses on Wednesdays and services on Sundays. Protestant Services are held Sundays at 12:30 in the Chapel.

One of Sister Mary Louise's favorite days of the year was her traditional morning with nieces and nephews from Minot: David Burckhard, Joan Massey, Janice Burckhard, and Mike & Phyllis Burckhard — at their annual Hot Cakes Café breakfast.

Mary, Dietary Manager, is hands-on for all kitchen duties.

Jenny, Child Care Director, and Loretta with some of the children on Pet Day.

Mo, Dir. of IT & his wife, Samantha, brightened life at STG's this year when their girls joined the other children in the childcare. Aiya is on the left, and her twin sister is Zahra.

Sharon, a Dietary Aide, with her granddaughter Sarah & her family.

Doris holding her newest great-granddaughter, Olivia… with Jolene, Chuck, Orion, Bryn and Jill, our Fearless Leader!

Amanda recently became certified for "Wound Care"… *she loves helping people heal well!*

Brittany, Amanda, Amber and Rebecca.

Bev helps keep the *Neighborhood* clean and pleasant for everyone, along with Jolene and ReNae. Virginia, now retired, too, still comes to help us now and then.

Jolene, Dept. Head for Housekeeping, is also in charge of all the seasonal signs that come and go at our home on first floor and in the Child Care. She's the one who makes Halloween the EVENT IT IS for everyone! All of us at St. Gerard's love that so many parents bring their children to parade past us. It gives all of us a sweet taste of home, as much as it does some sweet treats for the kids.