



The Cross Word

From Pastor Lisa

Dear Friends,

If I asked you, "What is Advent?", you would probably say, "getting ready for Christmas." And so would I. If we haven't already, soon we will begin our preparations. We will send cards, put up evergreens and lights, erect a tree inside and festoon it with decorations, buy gifts, go to parties, bake cookies, plan festive meals, sing Christmas songs; we will get ourselves "in the mood" for Christmas.

This "mood" can certainly be lovely. It can be warm and nostalgic and a journey back to childhood, for some of us. (It can also heighten pain and loneliness for others of us.) Yet Advent, and Christmas as well, are much more than our mood, much more than we bargain for. And how will we get ready for that?

May I suggest: this year, listen to the Advent (which actually means "arrival" or "to come") lessons - the ones we hear in worship. They speak of judgment and of freedom; of God tearing open the heavens and coming down with anger; of the "Son of Man" coming with great power; and of God bringing comfort and freedom and healing to the people. Advent is not just Jesus coming as a pretty little baby; we also look ahead to Jesus coming again in glory.

This Advent may be a time of mixed feelings: memories and expectations, grief over someone not at the table this year, uncertainty about the state of the world. Soon a cold, dark world that knows too much death and sadness will be addressed by God's visit to Bethlehem. Just as we yearn for the lengthening days and the sun of spring, we are blessed with the Son of God.

The true promise of Advent is that God will be with us in January, and February, and in whatever the new year brings. The wonder of Advent is that God has come to dwell with us, to lead us through the darkness to the light, through sorrow to celebration. So don't be afraid of the tensions of this season. Trust the good and enduring God whose promise is deep and wide. God comes and dwells right in the middle of our frailties and failings and tensions....and hopes!

May our Advent prayer this year be not that we get all the preparations "right", but that God will fill our hearts with the hope that comes to us, born anew, at Christmas - the hope that enables us to live. What a good mood to be in!

Blessed Advent and Christmas,

Pastor Lisa

**Lutheran
Church of the
Cross**

**December
2017**

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December's Altar Focus will be Carrie's Kids. In years past we have concentrated on boys jeans. This year although anything will be appreciated by Carrie's Kids in particular the most needed items are K-5th grade boys items: tennis shoes, socks, underwear, jeans, and pants.

Altar Focus

Martin Luther

Dad by Day We Magnify You Daily Readings for the Entire Year

This daily devotional book was first published in 1946 and contains selected writings from Martin Luther. This newest edition has updated language usage, contains cross-references to Luther's Works and has added a prayer thought for each day. As you read each day's selection you will get glimpses of social, ecclesial, military and political situations in the 16th century.

The selection for Christmas Eve tells us "I bring you good news". Luther goes on to tell us that the important word in that passage is YOU. YOU, the human being, YOU, the sinner, and YOU, meaning everyone.

In a later selection Luther advises us to "Be Christlike in all of your doings". Our forgiveness to others must be from the heart and we must become like him in conduct and character.

Day by Day has well organized readings throughout the church year as well as a prayer or bible verse related to the topic of the day. It would make a wonderful Christmas gift!

Book Review



Friday Night at the Movies December 8th 6:30pm. Deb Carpenter will head up organizing the event. A potluck dinner starts the event with an enjoyable movie following the meal.

Friday Night at the Movies

The first two verses of Psalm 100 in "The Message" reads: "On your feet now — applaud God! Bring a gift of laughter, sing yourselves into his presence!"

The Merriam Webster dictionary defines Lament as a way to, "express sadness or regret" and Laughter as "a cause of merriment."

On January 26th - 28th Camp of the Cross Ministries is hosting a men's weekend retreat that will bring together the prayers of lament and the merriment of laughter to participants as they laugh and sing themselves into God's presence.

Through lectures and Bible study participants will follow Jesus on his journey from the betrayal following his final meal with his disciples to the lament of Good Friday and the triumph of Easter morning.

The weekend begins at 5:30 PM Friday as participants gather at Ye Olde Malt Shop in Garrison ND for an evening meal before heading to Camp of the Cross. The retreat concludes with Sunday morning worship followed by brunch, before leaving by noon. Saturday afternoon 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM is designated free time. There will be a work project at the camp or simply time to relax.

Christmas is right around the corner. If you want to share some Christmas Cheer and brighten the day for many of our LCC members put this date on your calendar. It's become a tradition in our congregation. It's an event for all ages. We would love more voices so we can spread more cheer. Everyone consider coming this year. All the information is below. The more the merrier. It brings out the true Christmas spirit.

GREAT FAMILY EVENT

LCC is CAROLING again this year.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10th ~ MEET AT THE CHURCH at 2:00
BACK AT THE CHURCH at 4:00 for goodies and fellowship
ALL AGES WELCOME, WE NEED ALL VOICES

**COME ON FAMILIES, COME JOIN THE FUN &
BRING CHRISTMAS CHEER TO EVERYONE!!**

*Call Pam Hanson or Sally Grenz if you have any questions.
(There is a sign up sheet in the narthex.)*

**Men's
Retreat at
Camp of the
Cross**

**Christmas
Caroling**

New Event at LCC - and it involves COOKIES!

Get ready for the first LCC Holiday Cookie Walk on Sunday, Dec. 10! Bakers, alert! Dust off your pans and get out your best recipes for cookies, truffles, rosettes, krumkaka, sugar plums, divinity, gingerbread people, fudge..... whatever seasonal specialties are dear to your heart and taste buds. You are invited to bake for this event, where goodies will be sold by the dozen or by the pound. All of us love to eat treats of the season, but not all of us are able to bake. Make everyone happy and join in the fun!

The Cookie Walk will set up on Saturday, Dec. 9th at 3pm and will be available for sale after worship Sunday. Collect Christmas cookies you don't make but someone else does! Take some to a friend who doesn't get out much! Supply treats for busy families too on-the-go to bake! Give a little pick-me-up gift! Proceeds will benefit Heaven's Helpers Soup Café. Please let the office know if you will help setup on Saturday or with the sale on Sunday. Thanks!

Get your Christmas goodies, take them home or visit a friend, and put on your warm duds for a merry time of Christmas caroling, also Dec. 10 from 2-4 p.m.!

Heart River Child will be performing a Christmas concert at Lutheran Church of the Cross, 1004 E. Highland Acres Rd., Bismarck, 223-1001, on December 20th at 7:00 PM. All are welcome! In addition to the live performance, the concert will be "live streamed" via the church's web site at: <http://www.churchofthecross.org>.

Heart River Child (www.facebook.com/HeartRiverChild) is a group of Christian musicians that grew up in Heart River Lutheran Church in Mandan, ND. They first began playing music together in their Sunday school class in 2008. It didn't take long before they were sharing their music with the congregation during worship. As time passed, they picked up more instruments and began playing and singing more complex arrangements of music. They enjoy playing many different styles of Christian music, including bluegrass, folk, African American spirituals, global and contemporary music, as well as traditional hymns. In addition to playing regularly for worship in their home congregation, they've played many concerts in various communities. Through their tal-

Cookies,
Cookies,
Cookies,
Bars,
Cakes,
Truffles,
Fudge!

Heart River
Child
Concert

If you've been to an LCC worship service in the past few weeks, you've heard some of the Temple Talks about looking forward to a new paradigm of holistic stewardship in 2018 (Embracing Stewardship). The four fundamental principles of stewardship that were talked about are:

Everything we have or ever will have belongs to God. We are merely stewards of what belongs to God.

Stewardship is NOT about fundraising! Stewardship is about our growth and our development as disciples of Jesus Christ!

Proportional Giving! What matters most is what the gift represents in terms of the giver's total income...not the size of the gift, but what the gift actually costs the one who gives it.

First Fruits Giving, NOT "What's Left Over Giving"! First Fruits Giving is an acknowledgement...a putting into practice Principle #1...that everything we have comes from God and belongs to God, and therefore, God is entitled to more than just leftovers...God is entitled to the first and the best of what we have to give!

During the second week in December, you will be receiving a stewardship packet from LCC. Please read through it carefully and take time to prayerfully focus on all God's gifts to you as you consider your commitment to returning God's gifts with increase through the generous sharing of your time, talents and treasure.

Please return the Commitment Card and Time and Talent sheets to the church within a week of receiving the letter. We know you are busy, and don't want these to be forgotten!

In the coming weeks, we hope to see you as we celebrate Advent and the coming of Christ. Your council is busy putting together a budget to keep the church operational, planning to call a new Director of Discipleship (re-named Pastoral Assistant position), making commitments to the building, to mission support and our many ministries in 2018. None of this can happen without you! WE are the church, together!

Thank you for all your energy, enthusiasm, and commitment as we listen to what God is calling us at LCC to be and do. May God continue to bless you and your family.

In Christ,

Your Stewardship team and your Church Council

Equal Exchange Fair Trade Products at Cookie Walk

Look for a table full of Equal Exchange Fair Trade Products on Dec. 10 at our Cookie Walk in the Fellowship Hall. We will have coffee, hot cocoa, an assortment of chocolate bars and of teas, and baking cocoa.

**Embracing
Steward-
ship**

**Fair
Trade**

Camp of the Cross Pancake and Sausages! Breakfast

You may already know what a fantastic and tasty job our LCC cooks do with pancake and Wishek sausage breakfasts. (And if you don't.... here's your chance!) Whet your appetites because there is an upcoming opportunity to indulge in this deliciousness! Our annual pancake and sausage feed for Camp of the Cross Ministries will happen on Sunday, Dec. 3, again at 8:30 before worship and from 11-noon afterwards. Ingrid from CCM staff will be with us as well!

Camp of
the Cross
Pancakes
&
Sausages

Advent & Christmas Worship Services

Wednesdays in Advent bring us a whole new service, called "Holden Evening Prayer". It is a simple, melodic Vesper setting written by Marty Haugen, originally for Holden Village, a Lutheran Retreat Center in Chelan, WA. If you've never experienced this service, you're in for a treat! There will be communion, but no sermon at these evening services. Come and hear of the light shining in the darkness.

Sunday, Dec. 17: our worship service will feature the Church School's Christmas program (with both Sunday and Wednesday students involved).

Sunday, Dec. 24th: Christmas Eve is also the 4th Sunday in Advent, so we will have three worship services that day! You are welcome at one and all:

Sunday morning service will held as usual at 10:00 a.m. This is the fourth Advent service: the last one of waiting for our Lord Jesus.

Christmas Eve River Service is at 5 p.m. Join us for a great family service! Hear the Christmas story, sing carols and enjoy special music. No communion at this service.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service is at 10 p.m. This will be a service of lessons and carols with communion, closing with candles lifted as we sing Silent Night.

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE CROSS
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, November 14, 2017

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by President Ken Will. Council members present: Jeff Thomas, Kylie Blanchard, Jon Hanson, Tom Harris, Kim Humann, and Brian Johnson. Staff personnel in attendance were Pastor Lisa Ahlness, Connie Werner, and Art Wheeler.

There were no additions to the agenda.

Pastor Lisa led us in devotions.

Motion to approve the October Council Minutes was made by council approval; motion carried.

The Treasurer's report was presented by Art Wheeler and reported all bills are paid. Motion to accept the report was made by Jon Hanson, second by Kylie Blanchard; motion carried.

There was discussion on the 2018 budget. The sixth draft was gone over and the Council will make the final budget decision at the December meeting.

Pastor's report:

The Holiday Cookie Walk will be Sunday, December 10th. Cookies should be brought to the church on Saturday, December 9th.

On December 20th we will host a concert by Heart River Child. More information to follow when available.

Committee reports: Personnel:

Director of Discipleship—Ken will be going to Chicago on December 5th to visit with our candidate for Director of Discipleship, Steven Dickens and his family.

Building and Grounds:

The sign on the corner was tabled for now. The interior signage was presented, the cost is \$1531.00, Brian made the motion, Kim seconded to go ahead with the project, motion carried. Handicap door opening buttons have been installed on the back door and are now working.

Stewardship:

Pledge cards, time and talent sheets will be sent out after December 6th.

Budget committee—No report

**Church
Council
Minutes
November
2017**

Church Council Minutes continued

Faith and care—Camp of the Cross breakfast will be held Sunday, December 3rd and details for Wednesday night service are being discussed.

Mission support: Camp of the Cross breakfast will be held.

IT report: Tom Harris reported there are 8 computers within the Church building, He is working toward setting all of them up for use.

Unfinished business: It was mentioned that there may be a possibility of looking for a custodian for the church. This was tabled once again.

New Business: All Committee reports are due by December 12th to the respective Council Liaison.

Honoring Volunteers program: One volunteer will be honored per month. If anyone has someone they would like to nominate, please let any Council member know. This was passed by Council approval.

Nothing more before the council, the meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer. Next meeting will be Tuesday, December 12th, 2017 at 6:30 pm. C2 meetings start at 5:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeffrey Thomas, Secretary

The Church Constitution

Updating Our Congregation's Constitution:

In August 2016, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly voted to update the Model Constitution for Congregations. The draft, competently prepared for LCC by Synod Attorney Murray Sagsveen, is available for by contacting Connie in the church office. Because it is lengthy, and to save on paper and postage, printed copies will only be available if you ask for one, otherwise it will be sent to you electronically upon your request.

This new constitution (see a summary article elsewhere by Murray) must be ratified by a congregational written ballot vote at our annual meeting. It will be an agenda item for that meeting on Jan 14th.

Nominations

Nominations for 2018 Council, Missouri Slope, Camp of the Cross and Nominating Committee are currently being accepted by this year's Nominating Committee (listed below). If you are interested in running, or willing to serve for one of the listed positions, please contact a Nominating Committee member as soon as possible. They will gladly tell you more about what each position entails. Lutheran Church of the Cross would greatly appreciate your talents.

2018 OPEN POSITIONS:

Church Council positions (2) - 3-year positions

Missouri Slope Representatives (2) -1-year positions

Camp of the Cross Representatives (2) - 1-year positions

Nominating Committee (3) - 1-year positions

Nominations continued

Committee Members:

Lee Jensen - 255-1027; leru1vet@bis.midco.net

Carol Samuelsson - 220-9725; cnsnd2000@yahoo.com

Roger Kruger - 255-7514; justus6@bis.midco.net

Jon Hanson - 391-3416; jdhanson56@gmail.com

Ken Will - 258-7127; kenwill@bektel.com

Pastor Lisa - 220-9011 (c) or 223-1001 (0); lisaahlness@hotmail.com

Constitutional Changes Summary

Last year, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly updated the *Model Constitution for Congregations*. The proposed amendments, to be considered by this congregation at the annual meeting on January 14, would bring the LCC constitution into compliance with the ELCA *Model Constitution for Congregations*.

Most of the provisions in the constitution are required (indicated by an asterisk [*]), so can't be changed by a congregation, except for the options in brackets. Two examples:

Section *C8.02.d. allows an associate member to hold a membership in another [ELCA] [Lutheran] or [Christion] congregation.

Section *9.01 states whether [this congregation] or [the Congregation Council] elects the call committee when calling a minister of Word and Sacrament.

Other provisions, not indicated by an asterisk, can be tailored to fit an individual congregation's culture. Three examples:

Chapter 10 allows the congregation to establish the guidelines for its annual congregation meeting.

Chapters 11 and 12 allow the congregation to determine the elections and terms of its council members and officers.

Chapter 13 allows the congregation to determine the number and organizational structure of its committees.

Two important sections, C12.04. and C12.05., provide the "position description" for the Congregation Council. The congregation elects the council members, who constitute the board of directors for the church corporation, to provide leadership for the "general oversight of the life and activities of this congregation, and in particular its worship life" and for the "financial and property matters of this congregation."

The congregation can also adopt bylaws to implement constitution provisions. Examples are C13.02.01., C13.02.02., C13.02.03., and C13.02.04., which address the Nominating Committee.

Members of the congregation may view the proposed constitution and bylaws by contacting the Church office and asking that a copy be emailed to them or by stopping by the office and asking Connie to print out a copy. If you have questions, you may contact Synod Attorney Murray Sagsveen at Murray@WNSynod.org or 701-426-1905.

**Volunteers
are Needed
for Council
and other
committees**

**Constitution
al
Summary
changes**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
December Calendar 2017						
3 9:00 Worship Team Practice 9:15 Church School 10:00 Worship 11:00 CCM Pancake Break-fast	4 Altar Focus: Carrie's Kids, ELCA Good Gifts	5	6 Supper 5:00-5:45 5:35 Wed. W. Practice Wed. Worship/6p Confirmation Large Grp 7p River Practice 7p	7 8p AA Mtg.	8 Friday Night at the Movies 6:30pm	9 Book Club 12:30p LCC 3pm Set up 4 Cookies 4:30p Optional Sm Group River
10 9:00 Worship Practice 9:15 Church School 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour/Cookie Walk 2:00 Caroling	11	12 Reports due to Council Liaison Supper 5p C2 5:30p Church Council	13 Supper 5:00-5:45 5:35 Wed. W. Practice Wed Worship 6p Confirmation Sm Group 7p River Practice 7p	14 8p AA Mtg.	15 Newsletter deadline	16 Program Practice 4:30p Optional Sm Group River practice
17 9:00 Worship Team Practice 9:15 Church School 10:00 Worship/Christmas Pro-gram 11:00 Coffee Hour	18 Newsletter deadline	19 ELCA Bible Study 3p Note time change	20 Supper 5:00-5:45 5:35 Wed. W. Practice Wed Worship 6p Heart River Child Concert 7p	21 8p AA Mtg.	22	23 4:30p Optional Sm Group River practice
24/31 9:00 Worship Team Practice 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour 4:30/5:00 Prelude/Service 10:00 Candlelight Service	25	26	27 6:30a MM Bible Study @ Panera's No services /meal here.	28 8p AA Mtg.	29	30

HELP HEAT THE CHURCH

Heat for a Day donations are now being accepted. A monthly calendar is available in the entrance hallway for contributors to pick a day(s) to help Heat the Church. November and March will be \$10 per day, and December, January, February will be \$25 per day. Please enter your name on the selected date(s), and include if the donation is in memory of someone, or acknowledging a special event or purpose. Donations may be left with the secretary, put in the offering or use electronic giving. Thanks to those individuals or families who have sponsored the heat for November: Shirley Fox, John and Janet Doerner, Kay Koch, LorRaine & Roger Riveland, Gary Heaton, Josey Hanson, Helen Tessman, Ken & Karen Will, Art & Florence Wheeler, Pastor Lisa and Carol Samuelson.

An Alternative Christmas

Giving gifts has long been a part of Christmas celebrations in this country. If you're trying to give a gift to "a person who has everything" or would like to offer your children a way to learn about giving that doesn't include only lots of toys for themselves, but can transform the lives of other children.... consider the ELCA Good Gifts program, our other Altar Focus for December.

You will find Good Gifts ornaments on display in the narthex area. On each one is an uncommon gift that helps someone far away: chicks, honeybees, a goat, a pig, a water filter, school supplies, a microloan for a woman, medical care for kids – even a whole family farm! (You can explore many other giving opportunities in the *ELCA Good Gifts Catalog*, which you will also find in the narthex.) Select an ornament or other gift and make a donation in that amount. You can include the ornament in one of the "Your Gift Was Hard to Wrap" cards by the catalogs, or use your own to give to the recipient.

C2 and Church Council Meetings



The next Church Council Meeting is at 6:30pm Tuesday, **December 12**. A light supper at 5:00pm is planned for each month. The C2 committees meet at 5:30 and Council meetings are open to everyone. If you have an item to come before the Council, please contact Ken Will prior to the meeting.

**HEAT the
CHURCH**

**An
Alternative
Christmas**

**C2 Supper
5pm
C2
Committee
Mtgs. 5:30
Church
Council
6:30pm**



1004 E Highland Acres Rd
Bismarck ND 58501
Phone: 701.223.1001

churchsecretary@midconetwork.com

E-News

Worship Times:
Wednesday Worship
6:00pm

Sunday Worship
The River Service
10:00am

Lisa Ahlness, Pastor

Office Hours:
M - TH 8-4pm
Fri. 8-noon School Year
Summer Hours 9-1
Mon.—Fri

Lutheran Church of the Cross

2017 Church Council

Ken Will, President	258.7127
Jon Hanson, Vice President	391.3416
Jeff Thomas, Secretary	955.3632
Kim Humann	255.6547
Brian Johnson	391-0872
Kylie Blanchard	391.0373
Tom Harris	751.6371

Making Jesus Known by Sharing our Gifts