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# The Cross Word

November 2020

**From Pastor Lisa**

One of the blogs I read regularly had a recent post entitled “the greatest blessings in life are often the most forgotten.” I agreed with the author so much that I decided to riff on the same topic here.

In October, I celebrated 28 years of marriage. My husband is loving and kind and quirky. He delights in this time of year as he loves pheasant hunting – which he would happily tell you about, for hours.

I may take him for granted too much. When I hit the saturation point for talking about pheasant hunting, I may absent myself from his presence. There are days I am exasperated and forget to say “I love you.”

I have two stepsons, who are terrific people and who live nearby, but because they have busy families, we don’t see as much as we’d like. I love watching the six grandkids grow and all their different personalities and activities. I am grateful for all of them, and for the technology that helps us connect even when we can’t be together.

My three kids are in their twenties now. As of this writing, all three have earned master’s degrees. It is a pleasure to have conversations with them. They are considerate and kind and funny and intelligent and entertaining. They are hard workers, and persistent strivers for justice. They have brought me joy since they were babies and continue to do so. I have loved every stage of their lives and look forward to all their future adventures. We have made countless lasting memories, and yet I am wistful when they are not home anymore.

Why does it seem that our greatest blessings in life are the ones we too quickly forget, or take the most for granted?

It’s not that I don’t appreciate them. It’s just that too often, my mind dwells on other things: commitments at work, social media feeds, national news, sporting events, or someone on the phone.

The good I have been given is too easily replaced in my mind by the urgent or the things I wish I had.

Pastor's column continued

My home is warm and safe—a blessing that not everybody enjoys. But you know what I think about most while at home? The dresser handle that needs to be repaired, the ceiling fan that is wobbly, or that my bedroom takes too long to cool off at night.

My home provides safe shelter for me and my family. But rather than focusing on the positives, it's easy to dwell on the problems.

My freezer has food, so does our pantry. But what do I often say while staring into the fridge? "There's nothing in here to eat."

Some have closets full of clothes, packed to the brim on every hanger and shelf—enough supply to last the next ten years if necessary. And yet, the refrain is the same, "I have nothing to wear."

Gratitude or discontent, the choice is ours.

I grew up in a loving family, and my mother is still living in her home of 55 years. Despite leaving home 40 years ago, I talk to her every week, if not more. I was given a stable and loving home upon which to build the foundation of my life—a blessing as great as any other. And yet, too often, I forget about all the sacrifices my parents made along the way to provide that for me.

I'm not sure why the greatest blessings are the easiest to forget.

Maybe it's because they've become so commonplace to us that we don't even notice their existence (until they are gone). Maybe it's the nature of the human mind to constantly explore new thoughts and adventures and ideas, rather than remaining in the stability of what's known. Maybe it's because we live in a world that constantly stirs up discontent in our hearts and lives to distract us from the good. Or maybe it's because we just get so rushed and busy, we don't slow down long enough, or often enough, to appreciate what we already have.

I'm not entirely sure of the exact reason—and maybe it's different for each person. But I do know this: We'd appreciate the goodness and stability in our lives a little bit more if we made more effort to notice the good in our world—starting with the most obvious, because the most obvious is often the greatest.

The time change makes it more likely that I will watch the sun rise. May I take it in as a blessing, and not take it for granted. Another new day!

Pastor's column continued

Let's look around us for the greatest blessings, and for those who could use one, this November. We are blessed to be a blessing. See you in church, whether in the sanctuary or from afar!

Pastor Lisa

### **Angels Among Us**

Have you walked into the building and looked at the bulletin boards? Do you think to yourself man these are beautiful? I know that I sure do. This month our angels are the Sheila Suess and Josh Hocker along with their children. When Sheila was decorating the bulletin board this month, I told her how beautiful it looked. Her response was "It is great to use my artistic gift other than my home." They come up with beautifully themed bulletin boards every season.

Sheila and Josh also help in many other ways in the church. Often on Wednesday evenings you can find them helping with church school. They are both always eager to help in anyway they can from donating candy, to jumping in to help last minute with church school or confirmation.

Take a moment to thank them for all they do for us at LCC. If you see them give them an "air hug" or an "elbow shake". We are so blessed to have them be a part of our LCC family.

### **Opportunities to serve abound!**

We are looking to add to our production team! These are the folks in the booth at the back of the church who make worship run smoothly and make it available to watch at home and at another time. More volunteers mean more availability to rotate, so the same folks don't need to be here all the time. Bonus: upgrades to our equipment and software have simplified the jobs!

There are three parts involved: **projection**, which is advancing the program so that worshippers can follow the liturgy and songs on the screens in the sanctuary and at home; **livestream**, which is using the cameras to follow the service in the sanctuary for others to follow from away; and **sound**, which is working the soundboard to keep all the microphones in use balanced and at proper levels. Even complete novices can learn these easily. We are hoping to train several new volunteers – won't you join us?

In addition, we would like to add more **ushers** to our team. With COVID, some are unable to come in person. If you are willing, this is another job that is simple but oh so important. Let the church office know that you will help: 223-1001 or [churchsecretary@midconetwork.com](mailto:churchsecretary@midconetwork.com).

## Dates to Remember

*November 1 All Saint's Day*

*November 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 Stitches Group 9:30 am Multipurpose room*

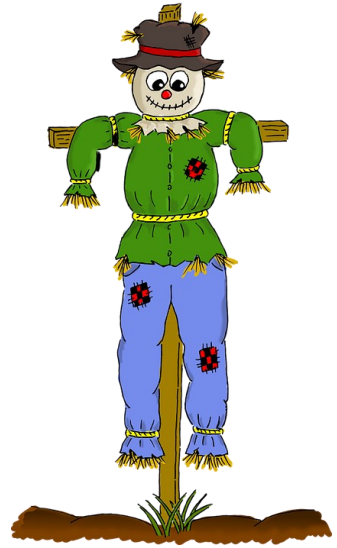
*November 10 Church Council 6:30pm*

*November 11 Veteran's Day Offices closed, no services or activities*

*November 14 Book Club 12:30pm Multipurpose Room*

*November 25 Women's Bible Study 9:00am, Joint Thanksgiving Service online 7pm*

*November 26, 27 Thanksgiving offices closed*



### Carrie Kids

Carrie Kids will be the Altar Focus for the month of December., It may seem early to be having this article in the November CrossWord but with the present circumstances and early store or online sales it was thought it was worthwhile to inform you now. There's a new twist to the process this year. A Christmas tree will be set up in the narthex with jean ornaments listing sizes of K –6th grade boys jeans needed as usual. Other items such as socks, underwear, etc. would be greatly appreciated. Jerry and Patty Hanson will set the tree up after Thanksgiving. However because of the pandemic some of you may not feel comfortable going out shopping but want to participate. Send a check with Carries Kids written on the memo. LCC in turn will then write one check to them. Or if you prefer you may also write the check to them and we will pass it along.



**Heat the Church for a Day** is here! Heat for a Day donations are now being accepted. A monthly calendar is available 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. With the positivity rate being so high call the secretary to indicate which days you are taking on, and include if the donation is in memory of someone, or acknowledging a special event or purpose. Donations may be mailed or one may choose to use electronic giving. Thank you in advance for continuing this tradition by way of taking care of your church building.

## **Christmas Flowers for the Sanctuary**

Although we are in the midst of fall, Christmas is not that far away. The Altar Guild wants you to know that they will be offering the poinsettias again this year. Traditions are important even in these trying times. Please just call or email the church secretary if you wish to participate. (churchsecretary@midconetwork.com or 223-1001 )Cost will be the same \$10. Send the check and place the word "poinsettia" on the memo line. In your email or phone call indicate who you are honoring or remembering.



## **Time Change this All Saints Sunday!**

It's our favorite Sunday of the year – an extra hour of sleep! J Don't forget to "Fall Back" this Saturday night or you'll wonder where we are at 10 a.m.! This Sunday is All Saints Sunday, when we celebrate and remember our loved ones who have passed away, and those from LCC who have died since last All Saints. You are invited to add the names of your dear ones on a dove on our All Saints Banner on Sunday, or call the office for us to add them for you.

## **Installation of Bishop Schweitzer this Sunday**

The installation of Craig Schweitzer as Bishop of the Western North Dakota Synod will take place this Sunday afternoon at 4 p.m., all online, with a few invitees representing us all. You can access it through the synod's webpage: [wndsynod.org](http://wndsynod.org) or go to [facebook.com/wndsynod](https://www.facebook.com/wndsynod). The livestream will begin at 3:45 p.m.

## **Wednesday Worship Coordinator & Advent Worship**

Joel Crane has joined LCC as our new part time Wednesday Worship Coordinator. Welcome, Joel! The Living Waters singers continue to lead our worship services Wednesdays at 6:15 p.m. This service is not livestreamed. We look forward to our special Advent services coming up on Wednesdays in December, featuring the lovely Holden Evening Prayer service. If Wednesdays work well for you, come join us for worship at 6:15 p.m.!

## **Thanksgiving Worship**

We will join once again with our ecumenical partners (the Bismarck United Church of Christ, St. George's Episcopal, and Faith Lutheran Church) in offering a Thanksgiving worship service this year. Due to COVID, this worship service will be exclusively online. It will premier on our Lutheran Church of the Cross Facebook page and on our website at 7 pm on Wednesday, November 25<sup>th</sup>. Don't miss it! Both of our pastoral leaders and The River will be featured in this service, so it's as close to "home" as we can make it. Join us in giving thanks to God this season.

## **Altar Focus**

You may have read an editorial in the Bismarck Tribune that highlighted how many students in the Bismarck Public Schools are in need of warm clothing this year – a few hundred families! The BPS foundation is inviting donations of new or very lightly worn snow pants, parkas, water-resistant gloves, and snow boots especially. (hats and scarves will not be turned away) They are also asking for new water bottles, as each child must have their own, since during the pandemic the water fountains are all turned off. If it isn't practical to go shopping, donations of money earmarked for this can be brought/sent to LCC (particularly if you want credit for the donation on your church statement) or made directly on the website [bpsfoundation.com](http://bpsfoundation.com). It's under the "featured initiatives" banner, and is called the Kids Kicks initiative.

The second half of our altar focus this month is the special project we all love, spear-headed by Shiela Mugaas in memory of her cousin. This is the collection of teddy bears for traumatized children. Some bears are already in the sanctuary, where we will pray over them and bless them before giving them to first responders to help in those tough moments of crisis. You are invited to bring a bear to join them! At the end of November the bears will be distributed.

## **Online Giving Options**

We want to say a giant THANK YOU to all of you who, even through this pandemic, have given to help LCC continue its ministry to the congregation, the community, and beyond. We are not yet back to "normal" giving levels, but have managed to stay in good shape as expenses have also been down. They will go up now as more programs start up again and the building is used more frequently, so we are grateful for all your continuing gifts.

Since many are not comfortable coming back yet, we are grateful to have so many options for giving. There is a button on our website, [churchofthecross.org](http://churchofthecross.org), that makes it very simple. If you are a smart phone or device user, you can also get and use the app "Give Plus". (You just have to be careful to choose the Lutheran Church of the Cross in Bismarck, rather than a different one somewhere else!) Or, you can simply text a number to our dedicated giving line (701)969-7030. So, for instance, if you want to give \$25, you simply text 25 to that number. (If you have a Vanco account already set up through our online button or app or texting, it will work across all of these approaches.) All of your giving, through any of these ways, will also be recorded on the statements you get from the church a couple times each year. If you have questions about any of these, call Pastor Lisa or our treasurer, Art Wheeler. And again: Thank you!

# Children Youth & Family Ministry

November 2020



## Church School Fall Schedule

November 1	Baby Moses	November 4	Baby Moses
November 8	The burning bush	November 11	No Church School
November 15	The Red Sea	November 18	The Red Sea
November 22	The 10 Commandments	November 25	No Church School
November 29	No Church School	December 2	The 10 Commandments
December 6	Joshua	December 9	Joshua
December 13	Jesus is born	December 16	Jesus is born
December 20	TBA	December 23	No Church School
December 27	No Church School	December 30	No Church School

## Confirmation Fall Schedule, Wednesdays at 7pm

**November 4** How to Read the Bible, what is in it and why do we read it? 8<sup>th</sup> graders meet in the building, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders meet online.

**November 11** No School

**November 18** How to Read the Bible, what is in it and why do we read it? 6<sup>th</sup> graders meet in the building, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders meet online.

**November 25** No School Nov 26 and 27<sup>th</sup> thanksgiving break

**December 2** Service Learning - importance on giving of time and talents - All grades meet online

**December 9** Grief and Loss - consoling someone else - 7<sup>th</sup> graders meet in the building, 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders meet online

**December 16** Forgiveness - how to forgive someone - 8<sup>th</sup> graders meet in the building, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders meet online.

**December 23** No School, Christmas break

**December 30** No School Christmas break



Lutheran Church of the Cross  
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# E-News

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## Worship Times:

Wednesday Worship  
Living Water Service  
6:15pm (School year)

Sunday Worship  
The River Service  
10:00am live streamed  
only

Lisa Ahlness, Pastor

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

## Lutheran Church of the Cross

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The Church Council meets once a month; the third Tuesday, at 6:30pm. The Council meetings are open to the congregation and all are encouraged to attend a meeting or to visit with a Council member if you have questions or concerns regarding the church. The Council is currently meeting via Zoom. Let Krisi Kunz know if you'd like to attend and a invitation will be sent to join Zoom.

**"Making Jesus Known by Sharing our Gifts"**