



The Cross Word

December 2020

From Pastor Lisa,

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:17

This verse was part of my wedding scriptures, lo those almost 30 years ago. It comes from a section of the letter (Col 3:12-17) where St. Paul encourages the folks at Colossae to forgive each other, be kind and compassionate, be patient, bear with one another, clothe themselves in love, and be thankful.

Paul's letters to the young churches in various communities are an important part of the New Testament. You will notice they sound similar, because they follow a pattern of sorts: a greeting, a prayer, some teaching, and some practical application of how we followers of Christ should live. St. Paul is often addressing conflicts and problems that are coming up in these groups.

There are, ever and always, problems and conflicts. We are in the grip of an ever expanding pandemic with frightening consequences and many changes to our lives. You may be happy with the politics of the day, or not. You may think it's no big deal, or you may be infuriated when people don't wear masks in public. Certainly someone you know has been ill; possibly someone has died.

Even when we will never all agree on particular issues, we can be united in Christ. We are part of the one body. St. Paul elsewhere encourages us to take special care of our most vulnerable parts. I am pulled back to this part of Colossians, and of others of Paul's letters. Bear with one another. Be compassionate. Act out of love for neighbor. Be thankful.

As we wait, in this time of Advent (Latin for "coming") for Christ to come as the infant at Christmas, and at the end of time to call us all to God, we won't solve all the problems. May we be patient anyway, and thankful, knowing that God is for us, calling us to live in love for one another, in this liminal time and always.

Peace be yours this Advent. "See" you in church, from near or far!

Pastor Lisa

Altar Focus : Carrie Kids and ELCA Good Gifts

Carrie Kids will continue to be the Altar Focus for the month of December. 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. Another possibility is to purchase a gift certificate from a local store for said items. Please turn that into the office rather than placing it under the tree.

The tree of Good Gifts will be set up in the narthex as it has in the past. The ornaments purchased goes towards the purchase of goats, chickens, roosters, pigs, honeybees, water filters, latrines, etc. to those in need who otherwise don't have the ability to purchase the above mentioned items.

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 LCC's church building. Thank you to the families of Hultin's, Crane's, Krueger's, Wheeler's, Miller's, Staloch's, Anderson's, Doerner's, Mugaas' and Schmidt's. Just an FYI...Normally by this time of the year more people/families have contributed to this fund. We've collected \$923 which is half of what we did in 2018 and in 2019 by this time the fund had \$1450 for the first 1 1/2 months. Thankfully the weather has not been inclement but the heat is turned on.



Christmas Flowers for the Sanctuary

One of the highlights that we can still enjoy this Christmas is seeing the beautiful poinsettias arranged so artistically around the altar by John and Jean Kraft and their small crew. The Altar Guild invites you to purchase a poinsettia to honor or remember someone important in your life because traditions are important even in these trying times. Please just call or email the church secretary if you wish to participate. Cost is 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. churchsecretary@midconetwork.com or 223-1001.) You are welcome to stop by the church and fill out the form if you prefer.

Dan's Supermarket Receipts

Though we are apart, we are glad that you are continuing to save your Dan's receipts. We are to our 4th goal of \$150,000 and have begun a new goal. Happily, we can go grocery shopping, and saving the receipts is a painless way to help mission projects at church. Thank you!!

Calling All Committees: Reports Needed for 2020 Annual Report

Committee reports are an important piece of the LCC Annual Report, providing key updates to the congregation on what is happening at the church. Having said that, with COVID-19 many committees have not been able to meet past March. If your committee hasn't meet please indicate that to the church secretary so she'll know a report will not be submitted. If committees have met regularly please submit the report to (churchsecretary@midconetwork.com) by **Friday, Dec. 18**, at the latest. Thank you to all LCC committees and members for the important work they do on an ongoing basis.

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? Wednesdays and Sunday positions are needed for projection and livestreaming. We want to livestream the beautiful Holden Advent series in December.

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.

Thanksgiving Is the Season of Giving

Thanksgiving (certainly one of my favorite holidays) was “a little weird” this year (no large family gatherings or “family and friends” events), thanks to the Covid-19 epidemic. So my thoughts turned to past Thanksgivings and most especially to the many “gifts” God has given Karen and me (for which I am eternally grateful). Covid-19 has caused all of us to reconsider the important things in our lives, for example: family, friends, neighbors, relatives, community and our church. Certainly, one of the most precious “gifts” God has given Karen and me is our church family.

It has caused us to realize that we need one another and we truly miss our church community and friends. We didn't realize how much we missed “coffee fellowship” after service! Pastor Lisa, Janie, Robin, Connie, Art and the whole church staff/volunteers/council have been doing a Herculean job of keeping us together as a “church family” during this time of “virtual” and reduced face to face church community. We are especially grateful of our church member's continued giving that is making it possible to continue the focus of LCC's mission statement: “Making Jesus Known By Sharing Our Gifts”. Thank you for your continued support.

As we approach this season of giving, one of the ways we can “give back” is by helping to perpetuate our church and its mission by supporting and donating to the LCC Mission Endowment Fund. One of the “painless” ways to contribute is via an IRA Charitable Rollover. If you are 72 ½ or older, you can use the IRA charitable rollover to help charities like the LCC Mission Endowment Fund continue its important work. The IRA charitable rollover allows you to meet your required minimum distribution (RMD) by directing your distribution to the Fund rather than taking it yourself. Here's how it works:

Call your IRA administrator.

Tell them you want to make an IRA charitable rollover gift.

Direct them to make the distribution to LCC Mission Endowment Fund (contact Art Wheeler for more direction).

You can distribute up to \$100,000 a year to charity to meet your RMD requirement. For the IRA charitable rollover to work for you, it is important that you do not take the distribution directly. The IRA administrator needs to make the distribution directly to the foundation.

A second “painless” way to give back (and to continue giving back perpetually) is to put the LCC Mission Endowment Fund in your will. A common way of doing that is to designate 10% of any residual estate (after the passing of you and/or our spouse) to the Fund.

God Bless,

Ken and Karen Will

Angels Among Us

It will be no surprise to many of you that know them that our angels for this month are Jeff and Barb Thomas! Jeff is usually the first one at church on Sundays, opening up the building, turning on the lights, making coffee (in normal times) and getting ready to welcome everyone in. He has served on council, and is one of our projectionists for worship. Jeff is a talented woodworker and has made crosses for Lenten decorations in the fellowship hall, and designed and made memorial crosses with doves on them for the families of our members who have passed away. He was also in on the bird-house project with the youth a few years ago! Barb was long a chief artist and designer of our big bulletin boards near the office (in cahoots with her partner, Sharon Narum). She has been making the Altar Focus boards showing the monthly projects for some time – they are great! She also serves on Helping Hands and Altar Guild, comes to Bible Study, has served as an usher together with Jeff. They were pioneers in the first group of Financial Peace University hosted here at LCC and helped shape that program. They greet old friends and new with cheerful smiles. Thanks for all you do - we appreciate you, Jeff and Barb!

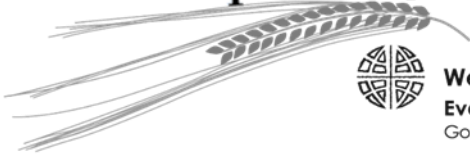
Advent Worship

Wednesdays in Advent – Dec. 2, 9, 16 and 23 – will feature the very lovely sung liturgy Holden Evening Prayer. These brief services will not include sermons, but scripture and a brief Advent-themed reflection or poem. Join us at 6:15 pm each Wednesday. If you are not ready to come back to worship – please note that for the first time, these services *will be livestreamed!* So you can watch from our website at that time, or catch up later. Blessed Advent to all!

Christmas Worship –RSVP for your Christmas Kit!

Sadly, it is not yet safe for 300+ of us to gather as we usually do for Christmas. However, our festive family Christmas Eve worship WILL be livestreamed – a half hour of special music beginning at 4:30, with the service itself beginning at 5 p.m. We are preparing Christmas Kits for everyone! They will include the bulletin for the service, a nativity scene craft, all-in-one communion cups for each person, and candles for each person to use as we all sing Silent Night together at the end. **Please call the church at 223-1001 and let us know how many people** will be in your “bubble” (that is, joining you for Christmas Eve worship), and we will prepare a personalized bag for you. Then just tell us if you’d like to pick it up, or if you’d like it dropped off, so we can make arrangements to get it to you. The bags will be ready once the service/bulletins are finalized, around the 15th of December.

As of this time, we do plan to have an in-person worship at 10 pm on Christmas Eve. This is our lessons and carols service featuring the Christmas story, communion and candlelight. One way or the other, we hope you will join us for worship on Christmas Eve! No worship service will be held on Christmas Day.



"Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11

This affirmation from the Apostle Paul was part of worship recently. It was something that has stuck with me in ways I did not expect. And in ways that one verse of scripture heard during a worship service rarely does. Encourage one another. Really? Build up each other. Huh? As indeed you are doing. Wait a minute Paul, seriously?? Have you seen social media lately? Have you heard the news or read a newspaper? Encourage? Build up?

I was a bit confused and more than a little challenged by Paul's affirmation. Whenever this happens, it often sends me into a time of silence. A time sitting in stillness with these sacred words. So that's what I did. And in the stillness my eyes were once again opened to the many ways and places we are indeed encouraging one another and building each other up during a year that is unlike any other in our lifetime.

We are gathering in community for worship - either in-person or online. We are praying for one another through email, text messages and phone calls. We are feeding one another through sacraments or a delivered meal. We are crying with one another as the effects of COVID-19 impact every facet of our life. We are encouraging one another when many of us are just plain exhausted from yet another Zoom meeting. We are building each other up so the good news of Jesus can be shared with every child of God placed before us.

Sisters and brothers in Christ of the Western North Dakota Synod - you indeed are doing these things. I've already witnessed it in my short time serving as your Bishop. In this season of thanksgiving, I simply want to say...thank you! AND - let's keep going. Let's keep encouraging and building and praying and serving and loving because that is what God is calling us to do as followers of the risen Savior Jesus.

Happy Thanksgiving and blessed Advent be with you. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you always.

Bishop Craig Schweitzer

Synod Video Channel

Video messages are a great way to share a message and the Western ND Synod has a new video channel where you can find devotional messages from Bishop Craig, recorded Zoom trainings, and Video updates on life together in the synod. Find our video channel at vimeo.com/wndsynod.

Church Leadership Forums for Council Members & Ministers

Watch for details about upcoming Zoom planning hosted by synod staff on topics for ministry today. These sessions are scheduled for Tuesdays at noon. Two past sessions focused on ideas for the Christmas season and for Annual Meetings keeping in mind COVID-19 concerns. These sessions also allow for discussion. What a great opportunity to gather online and share our ideas together! Our next session will be held Dec. 8th and will focus on Leadership in Anxious times. Recordings of past sessions are available on the video channel noted above.

Annual Appeal Update

Thank you to those who have already contributed, we have received \$21,700 to date and are on our way to the goal of \$30,000!

Your financial support goes directly to the important work we do of seeking, identifying, and inviting future leaders for the church. Your passion for ministry and support of the Western North Dakota Synod is a great testament to your love for Christ and the church. We cannot do this important work without you!

Please consider a making a gift that will help us reach our goal by the end of the year. Contributions may be given as a one-time cash gift or as a monthly donation and can be made on-line at www.wndsynod.org. Click on GIVE NOW and choose Annual Appeal or you may mail your contribution to: WND Synod, PO Box 370, Bismarck, ND 58502.

Children Youth & Family Ministry

December 2020



Church School Winter Schedule

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 Winter Schedule, Wednesdays at 7pm

November 25 No School Nov 26 and 27th 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 - 7th graders meet in the building, 6th and 8th graders meet online

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

December 23 No School, Christmas break

December 30 No School Christmas break

Christmas Program 2020

Like many things this year, our Christmas program will look very different. The families of LCC are putting on a virtual Christmas program. The program will be aired on Sunday, December 20th at 10am during the worship service. We invite you all to tune in and join. If you would like to share your musical gifts during the program, Janie is looking for people to record themselves playing Christmas music via the piano, singing, or any musical instrument. Please contact Janie if you are interested.

CONTACT INFO:

Janie Hague, Director of Discipleship

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E-News

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 9-4pm
Fri. 9-1pm School Year
Summer Hours 9-1

Lutheran Church of the Cross

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"