



The CrossWord

February 2021



From Pastor Lisa

True, the grass withers and the wildflowers fade, but our God's Word stands firm and forever.

Isaiah 40:8, The Message translation

There is a plant that sits on my desk at LCC. Maybe you've seen it. It always looks somewhere between ok, if a little bit sad, and downright terrible. I don't know what kind of plant it is – I should probably get one of those apps that will identify it for me if I snap a picture of it.

A knowledgeable-about-plants friend told me once what kind it was (I don't remember, it went by me too fast), and when I mentioned its "moods", she said that this type of plant is a drama queen, and will always let me know what it's feeling. I did understand it being completely drooped over and looking dead when I went away for a week and forgot to ask anyone to water it! But a little drink, and the next morning it stood upright again, resurrected.

More than once someone has told me to get rid of that plant. But, I am sentimental. I don't like to murder things for a little spot of ugly or shabbiness. Goodness, what if God's attitude toward us were like that? "I'm tired of you and your problems, that's enough life for you. Zap!"

But that's not what God is like. In spite of our ugly parts, our unlovable and uncharitable attitudes, words and deeds, God waters us with grace and forgiveness and new life so that we are revived and renewed. Given second chances. And third. And so on – thanks be to God.

Just like plants, we ourselves are not meant to last forever. The last year or so, we have felt battered and worn, grief stricken with loss, weary and suffering from the environment that has surrounded us. The good news is that God's grace and mercy have never wavered during this time – God has never forgotten to water us with love and gently revive us and bring us back to life. May we remember, when we are feeling tattered, that we are cradled in the palm of God's hand, and God will never let us go.

Blessings as we journey into Lent. See you in church!

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psalm 23:6

Pastor Lisa

Lenten Altar Focus – or Two!

For the past several years, we have joined congregations throughout the synod in raising money for our partner church in the Central African Republic. We have helped build schools, put roofs on churches, hire teachers, buy motorcycles for pastors to get from one congregation to another, supported the women's center and a much needed medical facility. Right now there is tremendous upheaval and violent unrest once again in CAR. You can help. Join in the "Sweet Deal for CAR" – pick up a tube of mini M&M's at church. Once you've enjoyed the treat, fill the tube up with change, bills, or checks memoed "CAR" and bring it back to church – either drop at the office or put in the offering plate. (Note: \$14 worth of quarters fits the tube perfectly.... as does a hundred dollar bill!) Let's not stop caring when our brethren are in crisis. M&Ms will be available on Ash Wednesday, February 17th. Offerings for CAR can be accepted until May 31st. New this year is a Lenten devotional on CAR put together by Barb Holwegner from Faith Lutheran in Bismarck. Pick up a copy in the Narthex.

Focus #2 is Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief. There is a need so great for these due to multiple disasters that LWR cannot keep up and is asking for our help. You will find descriptions of what goes in a kit on sheets throughout the narthex. You are welcome to create entire kits using the guidelines and bring them; if you prefer to bring just some of the items needed, please place them in the baskets by the altar focus bulletin board at the exit from the sanctuary.

Pastoral Visits Once Again Possible at Area Hospitals

The chaplains have let us know that pastoral visits are allowed. However, we can't magically know if your loved one is hospitalized. Please let the church know you would like a visit so we can be sure to be there for you!

GIFTS Group Formed in Bismarck – You are welcome to come!

GIFTS stands for Growing In Faith To Serve, and is a lifelong faith formation opportunity that helps participants grow in their faith and share their faith through service and proclamation in their homes, congregations and wider community.

A new GIFTS group has started in the Bismarck area under the leadership of Pastor Brian Knutson and Pastor Mark Narum. After an informational gathering, the participants from several congregations named that they were looking for ways to grow deeper in their faith, while at the same time trying to figure out how they live their faith. They decided to meet every 4th Tuesday of the month via Zoom at 6:30 p.m., and that they would like to start by digging deeper into the book of Galatians and Martin Luther's writing on that book. This group is open to more participants! If you are intrigued, let Pr. Lisa know so she can get you the Zoom information. You can also learn more about the GIFTS program on the WND Synod website:

www.wndsynod.org

Financial Peace University at LCC begins Feb. 21!

No more money fights! With *Financial Peace University*, you and your spouse will learn how to create (and stick to) a budget, save for emergencies, and make a plan for the future. Doesn't that sound peaceful? We're offering FPU at **Lutheran Church of the Cross** just for you starting **Sunday, February 21, 2021**. If you're interested in learning more, call the church office at 223-1001! All are welcome, so let your friends know, too. You can sign up and start your 14-day free trial of Financial Peace at fpu.com/1131201.

Angels Among Us

Our angel among us is 94 years young and an original charter member of this church. She and her beloved Bob raised their children here and were involved in the life of this church in so many ways. More ways than this writer is even aware of. Of course, you know that our angel is Gladys Bain. "Gladdie" to her friends. We haven't seen her much here since the pandemic but she continues to be involved as best she can through listening to the LCC's worship service through live streaming and was even involved in the Annual Meeting via zoom. A young techie at heart! Gladys is an avid reader and participates in the Book Club and has written many book reports over the years for Crossword. She enjoys writing especially poetry and participated in the Poetry Slam in 2017 by writing a poem about Martin Luther. She's a knitter and has knit prayer shawls for those in need. She was involved with the quilting group and the writer believes with her talent for teaching she must have been involved in Sunday School for many years. For LCC's 50th Celebration Gladys wrote the history of LCC. Who better to write than someone with such involvement as her!. She also chaired the landscaping committee at the time of the most recent renovations.

What this writer knows best about Gladys is she loves her God, her church and its people and she try's her best to live out her beliefs through her actions. What a great example for us to follow. Thank you Gladys!

Gary Miller painting given to LCC

We are so sorry that we neglected to hold up and show everyone the wonderful, original Gary Miller painting, originally owned by Dr. Marlin and Peggy Johnson, which has been given to LCC by Doug and Deanna Johnson. The painting is a winter scene, done early in Miller's career in 1964, of a couple of worshippers heading toward the Glencoe Church. It is entitled "Going to Pray." Right now this beautiful work is in the conference room, as a final place has not been decided. Stop by and see it!

Interested in Joining LCC as a New Member?

We have not been holding new member classes during the pandemic, but now is the perfect time to welcome you anew! If you are interested in joining LCC, or in hearing more about it, please call the church office or let Pastor Lisa or Deacon Janie know. Make sure we have contact info for you, and we will check in to see whether you prefer a class or one-on-one conversation and set up a New Member Sunday!

Ash Wednesday – Feb, 17, 2021

Ash Wednesday is usually a solemn service of reflection and repentance, often that brings one of our largest attendances of the year. The service this year will still be those things – except this year, livestreamed so that you don't need to come in person to join in this important worship experience. The ashes that are imposed on our foreheads are made from the dried palms we waved jubilantly on a previous Palm Sunday, mixed with some olive oil.

This year we will change that experience slightly. In person, we will impose ashes at a couple of stations, using a q-tip dipped in oil and then ashes, which will allow a bit more distance. Those imposing the ashes will be masked and gloved, and we ask that you continue to mask as well.

If you are worshipping from home, we are glad to send you the service bulletin and a very small Ziploc with some ashes to use yourself. They will be available by Feb. 12, and may be picked up, but are certainly small enough for us to mail. Please let us know that you would like them, and how best to get them to you. You may want to try the q-tip application method at home as well, as the ashes can be difficult to clean off your hands. Just dip it in oil first, as using water can cause irritation. (ash + water = lye!) You can also mark the cross of ashes on the back of your hand instead of on your forehead.

Wednesday Worship in Lent

Unfortunately, we are not able to do Lenten dinners this year. That is a much loved fellowship time! But we are glad to be joining several other congregations in offering worship around the theme "Jesus On the Way." It's a new-fangled (that is, pandemic) turn on the "round robin," where we will have the opportunity to hear different speakers, although they will join us via video. The rest of the worship will be live. Faith is a

journey. Lent is a journey. The pandemic is a journey. Join us as we discover the many places and ways we have met and will meet Jesus on the way. Wednesdays in Lent: February 24 and March 3, 10, 17 and 24 at 6:15 pm.

Six Weeks on Money

Money is like politics. It's not something we usually consider "polite conversation." But what if people want to talk about money, but they haven't yet experienced a safe and non-threatening environment? What if we're going to talk about the things that matter most in life - like how money touches our careers, families, relationships, purpose, and how we see the world?

Mostly, what is the relationship between faith and money? How do we respond to God's grace and the gift of life itself?

6 Weeks on Money is a digital course and group experience that we're offering at Lutheran Church of the Cross because we believe God wants to transform your relationship with money.

From scarcity to abundance.

From debt to getting ahead.

From the fear of not enough to gratitude for what (and who) I have.

All incomes, backgrounds, and generations.

Along the way, we'll "talk about money," but we'll do it in a way that is non-threatening and super practical. Register before Feb. 17 at the site below, but get the free code from Pastor Lisa first so that it does not cost you \$80!

<https://start.sixweeksonmoney.com/courses/ELCA>

Lutheran Church of the Cross

"Making Jesus Known by Sharing Our Gifts"

Council Meeting Minutes

December 8, 2020

Call to Order by President Krisi (6:35pm)

Attendance: Pastor Lisa, **Deacon Janie**, Kylie Blanchard, Ron Borth, Jon Hanson, Krisi Kunz, Mark Kunze, Heather Martin, Connie Werner, Art Wheeler

Devotions: Pastor Lisa led in prayer that covered individual concerns during this difficult time

Approval of October and November Minutes

Mark K motion/Kylie B second/APPROVED

Treasurer's Report: (Respectfully submitted by Art Wheeler)

All bills and statements as of November 30 have been paid.

All November bank statements have been reconciled and registries are correct.

Total adjusted income for November was \$26,558.80, which was \$10,319 less than the budget goal of \$36,878. Remember that the October income was much higher due to a significant Charitable Contribution received that month.

The adjusted November expenses were \$26,611.57. We had a net loss of \$52.77. The expenses were adjusted to compensate for the Replacement Media expenses. These expenses were previously reimbursed thru other gifts and designated contributions. I expect December special contributions to bring the Media Replacement line to equal.

I have also included in the report a full Budget vs Actual review for the first 11 months of 2020 (pg 7-9). Expenses are all in a normal range being about \$9,800 less than projected budget for the first 11 months. That's good considering the lesser total income.

The contribution to the Western North Dakota Synod for November will be \$1,168. We will have contributed \$18,734 this year towards the annual goal of \$25,000. There are four business days after the last Sunday in December. I hope to make the WND December contribution before the end of the year.

Of particular note on the Balance Sheet, under Liabilities, is a line Promissory Note Liability 1 for \$20k. With the redemption of Promissory Notes on December 1, that line on the Balance Sheet will be eliminated. This is a great milestone for LCC and a huge thank you to our members. Actual Long Term Liabilities will total \$255,000.

A note to a reimbursement to Art Wheeler was for software updates.

Ron B motion/Heather M second/APPROVED

Pastor's Report

Lisa and Janie participated in the Boundaries Workshop that covered professional relationships, social media and financial concerns. It also resulted in certification and recertification in some of these areas.

Participating in **Text** Study through LSS/Synod, multiple times a week

Contributing to Prairie Faith Devotions

Advent worship on Wednesdays

Counseling in/around town, addressing stress and mental health

Continuing preparations for Christmas services. We received an invite from Good Shepherd to participate in the Blue Light/Darkest Night service on Dec 21 at 6:30 pm. Also received an invite from Lord Of Life and their Drive-by Caroling, you can tune in on FM radio.

Deaths/Funerals: Vivian Dahl, Bryce Hill, Ray Staiger

Deacon's Report

Boundaries Workshop

Tech Study

Devotions

Christmas Youth Program, working on videos

Confirmation and Church School are going well, planning for 2021

Texting youth, checking on them and reconnecting

Local area Youth Directors meeting (virtual), one discussion item will be Vacation Bible School

Old Business

Calling continues to fill the vacant council seats: Scott Sommers, Jon Hanson and Heather Martin. Several names have been identified and will be contacted.

Draft 2021 Budget Approval

The draft budget was discussed at length, with most of the discussion about staff salaries.

After final numbers were discussed, a motion to approve the 2021 Budget was made by Mark Kunze, seconded by Ron Borth and approved 4-2. A request for a roll call vote was made and the results of that vote are:

Yea – Krisi Kunz, Mark Kunze, Kylie Blanchard, Ron Borth
Nay – Jon Hanson, Heather Martin

New Business

Appointment of 2021 Treasurer – Art Wheeler offered and accepted the nomination. **Heather M motion/Mark K second/APPROVED**

2020 Annual Meeting

Date for the meeting is January 24

Will be conducted In-person and Zoom, details will be worked out in the next couple of weeks.

Next Meeting

Annual Meeting – January 24, council organizational meeting immediately after the Annual meeting

Regularly scheduled meeting – **January 12**, 6:30 pm

Meeting adjourned at 8:44, followed by the Lord's Prayer

Thank you for what you do for Lutheran Church of the Cross!

Gospel Seeds - February 2021

A message from Bishop Craig

“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 6:1)

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Savior Jesus!

For many of us, the beginning of the sixth chapter in the gospel according to Saint Matthew marks the beginning of a sacred and holy journey through the season of Lent. I must confess, whenever I hear the words “practicing your piety before others” each Ash Wednesday, I giggle a little. Lutherans are not known for our boisterous faith sharing with others.

The Greek word in this verse of scripture speaks of “righteousness” not “piety” in a literal understanding of the word. And, here’s the important part, the warning in this verse speaks of the misuse of our own righteousness, how great we are or think we are. Matthew, and the season of Lent, gives us a chance to look deeply into that truth again. Are my actions and behaviors centered on me? Or on God? Lent reorients our life on God.

And when we speak and live out our faith with God’s righteousness at the forefront, we, as Lutheran Christians, have something to say. I pray that we are bold enough to say it and not keep it to ourself. As my colleague, Bishop Paul Egensteiner of the Metro New York synod, recently said, “God is calling us to follow the example of Jesus, to live the truth and power of the Gospel, to love all people, and to continue to serve God’s children together.” In other words, to show others just how awesome and great God is and to worry less about showing others how great we are. May that be central to our Lenten journey this year!

A couple updates from across the synod –

- I continue to welcome invitations to be with your congregation – via Zoom, video, or in-person. I've thoroughly enjoyed getting to know you and celebrate the many ways we share in the ministry God's righteousness is on display across our synod.
- The recent announcement of the closing of Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota was shocking to many across the prairie. We continue to hold all impacted in prayer – most especially the programs, staff, and clients of LSSND. May they be cared for and find hope and renewal in the days ahead.
- The synod offices will also be in a transition very soon. For many years, the synod offices have been in LSSND's Bismarck program center. We are currently looking for a new location for the synod offices. If you have an idea, please reach out to us!
- Synod Council will be meeting in-person or via Zoom on February 19-20. Please hold them in your prayer!
- Thank you for your Mission Support in 2020! Yes, Mission Support was below expectations. BUT – God's righteousness continued to shine through our collective

• As we continue to navigate all that the world has presented to the church and world in the past year, we give God thanks and praise. It has been a challenging time to be the church in these days. God is with us. And God's righteousness will continue to shine through the church into a world longing to see the reflection of God's goodness being lived out through each one of us.

Serving in Christ together, Bishop Craig

**Mark Your Calendar: 2021 Synod Assembly
June 4 & 5 at the Grand Hotel in Minot**

New Sunday Series in Lent

Sundays in Lent, beginning February 21, we will diverge from the lectionary to explore a new series called "Unraveled: Seeking God when our plans fall apart." What happens when our world falls apart? How do we press onward when our tightly-knit plans unravel into loose threads? What do we become when our identity – or the path we're on – comes undone?

In our unraveling, sometimes life surprises us with unexpected joy, love and hope – with a new beginning we couldn't have imagined. Sometimes we need God to unravel us, for we long to be changed. Come join us as we explore Biblical stories of unraveled shame, identity, fear, grief, dreams and expectations – where God meets us as we spiral into something new.

Wheeled Walkers with Seats available from LCC

We have been gifted with several walkers by families whose members no longer need them. These items are available for your use, even long term. We have three normal walkers, that you lift and push along for stability, and three wheeled walkers with brakes and seats to take a rest when needed. Please call the office if you or a loved one could use one of these walkers!

Children Youth & Family

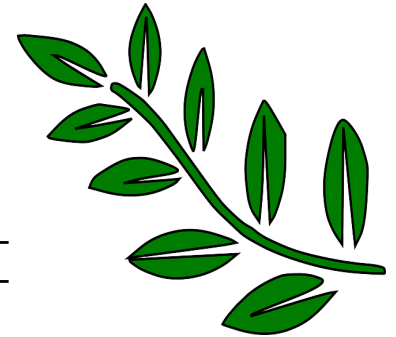


February 2021

- 1st Communion classes are fast approaching. Classes are for 3rd graders and anyone else who is ready to take communion. Sunday kids March 7th and March 28th at 9am. Wednesday kids March 17th and March 24th at 7pm. First Communion will be received on Thursday, April 1st at 7pm. Please contact Janie to sign up.

Palm Sunday Easter Egg Hunt

Lutheran Church of the Cross is joining together with other churches for a Palm Sunday Easter Egg hunt. We will take



donations of plastic eggs and candy. Donations can be dropped off at the office. Look for the March newsletter for more information. If you have any questions please contact Janie.

February Church School Schedule:

February 7 David and Goliath

February 14 No Church School

February 21 Kings David and Solomon

February 28 Solomon Builds the Temple

March 7 Memory Work - Apostle's Creed

February 10 David and Goliath

February 17 Ash Wednesday, No church school

February 24 Kings David and Solomon

March 3 Solomon Builds the Temple

March 10 Memory Work - Apostle's Creed

February Confirmation Schedule:

February 3 Anatomy of a church - 8th graders in person, 6th and 7th graders meet online.

February 10 ELCA Synods, conferences, and Christian Denominations - 6th graders in person, 7th and 8th graders meet online.

February 17 Ash Wednesday No confirmation

February 24 What is Lent, Lent world hunger calendars - Service Learning - All grades meet online

March 3 World Religions, liturgical and non-liturgical - 7th graders in person, 6th and 8th graders meet online.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my Shepherd = **That's Relationship!**

I shall not want = **That's Supply!**

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures = **That's Rest!**

He leadeth me beside the still waters = **That's Refreshment!**

He restoreth my soul = **That's Healing!**

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness = **That's Guidance!**

For His name sake = **That's Purpose!**

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death = **That's Testing!**

I will fear no evil = **That's Protection!**

For Thou art with me = **That's Faithfulness!**

Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me = **That's Discipline!**

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies = **That's Hope!**

Thou annointest my head with oil = **That's Consecration!**

My cup runneth over = **That's Abundance!**

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life = **That's Blessing!**

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord = **That's Security!**

Forever = **That's Eternity!**

This was shared with the secretary from Lois Hanson.

Confirmation Pictures

LCC is missing many years worth of pictures. If you have one of the years listed below and either have a duplicate or are willing to share so a copy can be made please contact the office.

2008 (unsure if there was confirmation that year), 2011, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
February 2021	1 Needlework Group 9:30am	2	3 6:15pm Worship 7:00pm Church School Confirmation	4 8pm AA Mtg.	5	6
7 9:00 Church school 10:00 Worship	8 Needlework Group 9:30am	9	10 6:15pm Worship 7:00pm Church School Confirmation	11 8pm AA Mtg.	12	13 12:30 Book Club
14 9:00 NO Church school 10:00 Worship	15 Needlework Group 9:30am	16	17 Ash Wednesday 6:15pm Worship 7:00pm No Church School, or Confirmation	18 8pm AA Mtg.	19	20
21 9:00 Church School 10:00 Worship FPU 6pm	22 Needlework Group 9:30am	23	24 9:00 MM Bible Study 6:15pm Worship 7:00pm Church School, Confirmation	25 8pm AA Mtg.	26	27
28						

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E-News

Worship Times:
Wednesday Worship
6:15pm (School year)

Sunday Worship
The River Service
10:00am

Lisa Ahlness, Pastor

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

Lutheran Church of the Cross

The Church Council meets once a month; the second 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.

“Making Jesus Known by Sharing our Gifts”