



The CrossWord

August 2021

From Pastor Lisa

(the Lord) said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." 2 Cor 12:9

Have you ever felt like your faith wasn't enough? Good enough, big enough, prayerful enough? Like God doesn't like you, or isn't paying attention to your problems or needs? Like God doesn't know or care about you - isn't giving you the answer you need? Do you feel like other people get lightning bolts, miracles, experiences of God's real presence, and you just feel empty? Maybe your illness or your spouse's would be cured if you just had more or better faith in God?

Maybe you learned about faith in confirmation class and just couldn't reconcile that with the actions of the church folk around you. Maybe you just aren't sure – possibly you'll believe in God someday, but right now you just don't feel it. Maybe you can't reconcile the awful things that happen in the world with a good and gracious God.

You probably have heard of Mother Teresa, even though she died in 1997. She is now a saint in the Roman Catholic church. Teresa was an Albanian-born nun who founded the Missionaries of Charity and spent most of her long life in India caring for the wretched poor. Through those many years, she famously cared for lepers, the dying poor of all religions, people in war-torn places, orphans, and many more. She received many honors for her tireless work, including the Nobel peace prize.

After her death, it was revealed that she had felt the utter lack of God's presence for over 50 years. She wrote to her confessor about this spiritual dryness, this emptiness. She operated all those years basically on trust in the promises of God and hope in closeness to Christ that she didn't feel. It is astonishing to realize one human being could accomplish and inspire the magnitude of good through acts of faith that she did, all the while not feeling God with her, except in the promises she'd learned.

What can we do when God seems far away?

Remember even Jesus felt abandoned on the cross. We hear the pain in his words: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

And we also know he wasn't forsaken. Death wasn't the end of Jesus.

Each one of us billions of humans on this earth is unique. And God loves every one of us. We won't all have the same experience of faith. When God seems far away, we can follow Mother Teresa's lead. We can trust the promises of Scripture. We can confide in someone of faith whom we trust. We can pray, and trust, and act bravely in faith as if God is right beside us all the way – because God is.

Peace to you as we journey in faith.

Pastor Lisa

"I have called you by name; you are mine. You are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you." Isaiah 43:1,4

Angels Among Us

Our angel this month is Pastor Gary Heaton. You may have experienced Gary when he preached or presided at LCC (always a great gift), or seen him during one of the Lenten series. A "theater guy" before his ministry, Gary has been part of skits and dialogues and monologues and shared his faith story as well. He has a dry sense of humor and a quick wit, and always has a one liner at the ready! Gary is also a movie buff and has helped run our movie night, as well as offering a popular movie ministry at the state penitentiary for years. Pastor Gary is a supporter of many ministries, and has been instrumental in moving them forward: Kogodus prison ministry, Welcome House here in Bismarck, and Camp of the Cross, to name a few. As a chaplain, he is the friendly face at Sanford when you are about to undergo a scary procedure. He has also been a mission developer (starting up a new congregation) at Living Water Lutheran in Mandan, and a director of AID, inc. Pastor Gary has been a leader and active participant in LCC's men's Bible study group and men's retreat, as well as our inaugural poetry slam – his was the poem in "Burma Shave signs" style! We are so lucky to have Gary in our congregation. Give him a pat on the back and a thanks when you see him!

Altar Focus for August!

We will continue to collect items for baby care kits during August, and keep your eyes peeled for a to-be-determined date to create some diapers and baby caps out of t-shirts and put some kits together!

Focus #2 is all sorts of school supplies! Most will go to fill needs at our two neighborhood elementary schools. Have fun shopping the sales, even if you don't have kids of your own going back to school, and thanks for your generosity!



Relationship.

Relationship.

Relationship.

Relationship with God.

Relationship with each other.

Relationship with our neighbors.

This is who we are...

This is who we are called to be...

As communities of faith, all our work is about and informed by relationship.

Faithful, faith-filled relationships are rooted in prayer and scripture. Through these, we connect with God and explore who we are as a beloved child of God. Likewise, these relationships grow when we are engaged in community. In community, where we are called to dwell, relationships are nurtured and deepened. Within community, we are called to ask difficult questions and listen deeply to varied responses. We grow. We adapt. We wonder. We respond. This is who we are as community. This is who we are as church.

As church – congregation, synod, and churchwide – we have an incredible opportunity before us. We have the gift of living in a time of rapid (maybe seemingly constant) and expected or anticipated change. Yet, we also do have the opportunity to pause and ask ourselves, “How might we...?” or “Why?” Perhaps now is the time to step boldly into some holy experiments and holy learnings?

How might we lean into uncovering what God is up to now in our communities? How might we live into God’s preferred future for each and all of us? How might we embody Christ in our changing world? (And by “us” I mean as individuals, congregations, synods, and Church.)

As your Director for Evangelical Mission and Associate to the Bishop for Congregational Life, I would welcome the opportunity to walk with you and your congregation through a season of listening, discerning, naming, and discovering your congregation’s values and mission priorities. It would be a gift to dream big, holy dreams and wonder with you how as God’s beloved children, you might be the hands, the feet, the voice, and face of Christ right where you are!

So.... Are you – is your community of faith – ready to: Engage in a holy experiment? Experience a faithful failure? Explore some loving learning? Together, let’s commit to taking one ridiculously small step and see what happens!

Relationship. Relationship. Relationship. All our work is about relationship.

In Christ,

Sherie

Associate to the Bishop for Congregational Life
Director for Evangelical Mission
sherie@wndsynod.org

“The hoped for result of the faithful innovation process is to help congregations make deeper connections with God, each other, and their neighbors, and to have congregations experience church in a new way.”

Summer Picnics and Outdoor Worship

One Wednesday each month this summer, we will gather for a picnic and brief outdoor worship. ****Note: these will NOT be potlucks.**** We will grill hamburgers, hotdogs, and chicken breasts, and provide chips, drinks and fixings. You just come and enjoy! Bring your favorite chair if you like. The next summer Wednesday service will be on August 11th, with food ready at 5:30 and worship at 6 p.m. Hope to see you there! Camp of the Cross will be leading the worship with our own Marin Traynor and Mackenzie Johnson. You'll want to come and hear about their summer at COC.

Travel with LCC to Israel!

Wouldn't you love to see the Holy Land? All those places you've heard named but can't yet picture in your head: Bethlehem, Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, Jordan River, Jericho, Jerusalem, Bethany, Mt. of Olives, Bethany... you will never hear the Scriptures the same way again. Pastor Lisa will lead our group Jan 31-Feb 8, 2022. Info in the narthex, or call her. ****The trip is fully refundable if you should change your mind.**** Join us! Friends, neighbors, family welcome. Group members can depart from other places, as well.

More Opportunities to Help This Summer

There are now clipboards with the summer Sunday dates listed for you to sign up to bring treats and serve coffee (always fun to do with a friend or as a family), and to run the dishwasher. We all enjoy the fellowship after worship so much. If a date works for you, sign up! With a variety of people joining in, the work doesn't fall on the same few all the time – and it's fun! (PS the dishwasher is easy, and a quick training by one of our many experts will have you delighting in your new skill in no time!) Look for the clipboards on the table with the coffeepots on it.

Did You Know...

That because of health care privacy laws we cannot know if you or your loved one is hospitalized unless you tells us. Please do help us know if someone needs or would appreciate pastoral care. Thank you!

The Sunday bulletin and the Order of Worship bulletin is on the website as well as the publishing of the Church Council minutes and the CrossWord newsletter.

The Faith and Care Groups are being reorganized and will be ready to go by September 1.

There are items from the Youth Room that are available for a free will donation. They are located by the back door.

HIGHLAND ACRES

BLOCK PARTY!

WEDNESDAY

AUGUST 18, 2021

6 PM DINNER & CAR SHOW



Parking Lot @ United Church of Christ
(1200 East Highland Acres Rd)



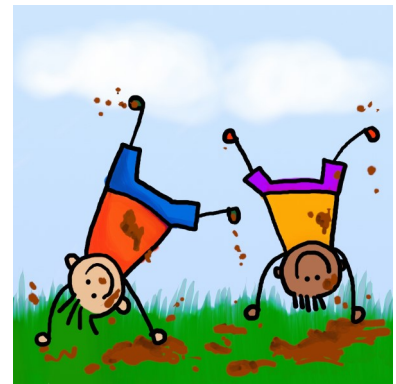
6:30 PM PROGRAM

Honoring our departed neighbors: Doc Wilson & Rev. Joel Sherer, and recognizing Adopt-a-Block for their efforts during the pandemic.



7 PM DESSERT & YARD GAMES

Parking Lot @ Lutheran Church of the Cross
(1004 East Highland Acres Rd)



PLEASE JOIN US FOR SUMMER FUN!

**Bring a lawn chair if you're able*

In the event of heavy rain or storms, the Block Party will be rescheduled for
Wednesday, September 1.

If you wish to donate:

LCC is collecting school supplies for BPS

UCC: non-perishable food items for Adopt-a-Block

Children, Youth, & Family Ministry

August 2021



Youth Group and Family activities!

August 11th: For people of all ages we will have an outdoor movie night starting between 7:30 and 8pm after worship on the 11th. We will watch the movie *Wonder*.



August 18th: Block Party. Join Church of the Cross and United Church of Christ for a block party. Meet at UCC from 5-7pm for dinner and then wander your way up to Church of the Cross for lawn games, a bouncy house, and dessert. Hope to see you all there!



August 22nd: We will be blessing the backpacks for youth going back to school during worship at 10am. So please bring your backpack to worship that day.

August 22nd: Back to school party at LCC from 6pm-7pm. Families are invited to join Janie at LCC for games and ice cream for a back to school party celebration.

September 8th: Confirmation orientation at 7pm—students and parents will meet their small group leaders and learn about confirmation. Parents and students are asked to attend.

September 8th: Confirmation Mentor Meeting at 6pm—9th grade students and their parents who will be confirmed this fall will meet at the church to go over the mentor program and being confirmed.

September 12th and 15th: Come to the church at 9 am on the 12th and 7pm on the 15th to meet your teachers and games! There will also be a potluck on September 12th following worship and a potluck on September 15th before worship.

We are still in need of church school teachers and one confirmation small group leader for this year. If you are interested in helping in either of these roles please let Janie know.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
August 2021 1 10:00 Worship Service	2 Needlework Group 9:30am	3 Staff Meeting 10am	4	5 8p AA Mtg.	6 Wired Word 1:30pm	7
8 10:00 Worship Service	9 Needlework Group 9:30am	10 Staff Meeting 10am	11 Book Club 1:30 "The Watchman" Church picnic 5:30 Worship 6pm Church Council 6:30 Outdoor Movie Night	12 8pm AA Mtg.	13 Wired Word 1:30 pm	14
15 10:00 Worship Service	16 Needlework Group 9:30am	17 Staff Meeting 10am	18 Block Party @UCC 6-7pm 7pm here desserts, games, Bouncing house	19 8pm AA Mtg.	20 Wired Word 1:30 pm	21
22 10:00 Worship Service Blessing of the Backpacks Back to School Party 6pm	23 Needlework Group 9:30am Knitting for Others 1pm	24 Staff Meeting 10am	25 9:00am MM Bible Study	26 8pm AA Mtg.	27 Wired Word 1:30 pm	28
29 10:00 Worship Service	30 Needlework Group 9:30am	31 Staff Meeting 10am				

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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 8-4pm
Fri. 8-noon School Year
Summer Hours 8 to noon
Mon.—Fri

Lutheran Church of the Cross

The Church Council meets once a month; the second Thursday 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”