



The CrossWord

January 2022

From Pastor Lisa

"A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good." Romans 12:7

I love that, in this season, there are many holiday movies available to watch on TV. Do you have a favorite? One of them that is often seen around Christmas actually tops my all-time favorite movie list: "It's a Wonderful Life," starring James Stewart and Donna Reed. (I can't imagine a person never having seen this movie, but if somehow you haven't – please watch it soon!)

Jimmy Stewart plays George Bailey, who has big plans to see the world that never come to fruition, as something always gets in the way, and he's the responsible oldest child of the family. (I won't go into all the details, just in case you want to watch and see for yourself!) The climax of the movie comes when George is at his lowest point, on a bridge over the river in a driving snowstorm, considering throwing himself over and ending it all.

Spoiler alert: go watch now if you don't want to know yet!

Someone intervenes: namely, an angel named Clarence. When George wishes he'd never been born, Clarence grants the wish, and takes George back to see what the world would have been like if he'd never lived. We relive some of the highlights of the movie with different outcomes, and together with George, realize what a large impact he's had on the people around him and the community at large.

I hope Christmas gave you a chance to be with or talk to those you love, and to do something meaningful for someone else while celebrating the birth of Christ. But I know it's possible the holidays are a lonesome time for you. Maybe you're missing someone terribly today. Perhaps you're feeling down and like you just don't matter to anyone.

Whatever emotions you're experiencing this season, I hope you can take some quiet time to reflect and ponder what's past and the possibilities that lie ahead. "It's a Wonderful Life" reminds us that even if we're missing someone who's gone.... we can remember with gratitude how they changed our lives and the world around them for the better.

If we're feeling down on ourselves, like the movie shows George, we can look back through our own lives and realize it's really been a wonderful life – people have graced our lives and things have happened that may have been difficult, yet God still had a plan and we came through it. If you give someone a chance to reminisce with you, they just might point out how important you have been to them.

As we enter a brand new year, filled with potential – none of us knows what lies ahead. But we know whose we are, and we journey forward in faith, together.

Blessings to you and yours. I look forward to seeing you in church!

In Christ,

Pastor Lisa

Angels Among Us

With Christmas just past, we want to pause to honor all those without whom it would be impossible to create the wonderful worship services we all enjoy. So this month, please take a moment to notice and to thank as many of these volunteers as you can find: the singers and musicians of the River worship team and the Living Water worship team, as well as their coordinators, Robin Johnson and Joel Crane; the production team doing the sound, livestream and projection for the services and their technical adviser, Tom Harris and scheduler, Karen Will; the ushers and their organizer, Barb Norby; the altar guild, which prepares for communion and beautifies the sanctuary, and its captains, Cherie Krueger and Jean Kraft; and our “chief engineer,” John Kraft, who changes the paraments and puts up the Christmas trees and wreaths, and generally makes sure everything is working; our church openers and preparers, Susie and Redg Finck; and the many bakers and dish washers who help us enjoy coffee fellowship each week. (Deepest apologies for anyone not mentioned.) We give you heartfelt thanks and appreciation! None of it would happen without you!

Altar Focus for January

With the deep cold forecast to continue much longer, we will continue to collect warm things for the agencies that help those most in need. New and clean, good condition used items may be brought: Hats, mittens/gloves, scarves, etc.

We appreciate your gifts of food for the Emergency Food Pantry: thank you for continuing to bring them. They tell us supply issues are a problem and that even the Great Plains Food Bank (which supplies them and other food pantries and mobile units throughout the area) is having trouble getting food to supply them. ****We would like to do a special emphasis on feminine hygiene items and diapers this month **** for them to supplement the food donations. Thank you for your generosity!

Christmas Is the Season of Giving

Christmas (certainly one of my favorite holidays) was “a little weird” last year (no large family gatherings or “family and friends” events), thanks to the Covid-19 epidemic. So, our thoughts turn to past Christmases and most especially to the many “gifts” God has given us. 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 us 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 (thank goodness we are now back enjoying this fellowship)! Pastor Lisa, Janie, Robin, Connie, Art, the Council 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 for 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.

In 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:

1. Call your IRA administrator.
2. Tell them you want to make an IRA charitable rollover gift.
3. 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.

North Dakota allows a Tax Credit for individuals, businesses, trusts, and estates wherein they can take advantage of a 40% state tax credit for contributions of over \$5,000 to a 501c3 like LCC's Mission Endowment Fund. So, as an example: if a ND taxpayer is in the 25% tax bracket and donates \$5,000, after taking advantage of an estimated federal tax savings of \$1,250 and a ND income tax credit of \$2,000, the net cost of the donation is just \$1,750.

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.

An estate, trust, C corporation, and any other type of business entity (except a sole proprietorship) is also allowed an income tax credit for making a charitable contribution to a qualified endowment fund, Like the LCC Mission Endowment Fund.

We have even added an “on-line” giving portal on our web site. For more information, please see and/or talk with one of the Board members (Ken, Art, Kerry and Brian).

The Board’s goal for 2022 is to reach the \$100,000 benchmark so we can invest our fund in a managed account where interest rates are **much better** than in a bank savings account.

We hope to add a donor recognition tree (“Giving Tree”) on a wall in the church, to celebrate the names of Fund donors. "Giving Trees" present a wonderful way for parishioners to celebrate life and life cycle events. Births, communions, confirmations, birthdays, weddings, anniversaries and “in memory of” may all be marked by donating leaves on the church donor tree. More information will follow in the first quarter of 2022.

God Bless and Merry Christmas,

Your Mission Endowment Fund Board
Ken, Art, Kerry and Brian

THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU

A special thank you to those of you who gave the gift of jeans to Carrie’s Kids. Three trips were made to them during the month of December.

Book Selections for the Book Club.

THE GIRL WITH THE LOUDING VOICE

by Abi Dare

Jan. 12

SOOLEY by John Grisham

Feb. 9

A Message from Bishop Craig

January 2022

A MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP This
Month's Writer: Deacon Beth Anderson, Associate for Leader-
ship & Formation



Matthew 2:1,9-11 (NRSV) 1 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage. . . ." 9 When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. 11 On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Several years ago, my daughters and I embarked on a non-traditional Christmas-gifting project. We had long upheld the tradition of sharing trays of homemade goodies with our neighbors on Christmas Eve. That year, however, one of my girls was diagnosed with celiac disease shortly before the holidays. Having not yet mastered the art of gluten-free baking, I wasn't about to subject my neighbors to our early culinary experiments. While we graciously received delicious treats from others, Christmas passed and we had nothing to share in return except a simple, "Thank you for thinking of us."

As the days of Christmas waned, my heart was drawn toward the coming of Epiphany. Beginning January 6th of each year, the church enters the season of Epiphany when we celebrate God's light bursting into the world in the person of Jesus. During this season, the readings we hear in worship remind us that just as the light of the star guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ comes and reveals who we are: children of God, beacons of the light of Christ called to share the good news of God's love with all.

So that year, instead of filling my counter with sugar and flour, my daughters and I filled it with wax and wicks. We made candles marked with promises of Hope, Joy & Love. We shared these with our neighbors, the ones we knew and the ones we didn't, praying that when they lit them, whether in the long dark nights of January or throughout the year, they would know love.

The wise men were drawn from a far-off place to pay homage to the Christ child. This story reminds us that indeed, God comes in Christ for all the world. Everyone is welcome, and so are their gifts.

Just as the wise men honored Christ with gold, frankincense, and myrrh, we too are invited to offer our gifts and talents. Whatever we bring—no matter how simple or non-traditional—God uses to ignite hope and love in our world.

Like the wise men, may you too be overwhelmed with joy as Christ inspires you both to use your gifts to brighten your community and to receive the gifts of others with thanksgiving.

A Blessed Epiphany to You!

Children Youth & Family Ministry



January 2022

Confirmation Schedule

January	5	Large Group Night Theme: Wilderness to Land <i>Please read: Exodus: 16:1-15; Joshua 24:14-18; Deuteronomy 6:4-9</i>
	12	Small Group Night
	19	Large Group Night Theme: King David <i>Please read: 1 Samuel 16-17, 18:10-16; 2 Samuel 2:1-7; 5:1-10; Isaiah 9:6-7</i>
	26	Small Group Leaders' Summit
February	2	Large Group Night Theme: A Split Kingdom/Exile and Return <i>Please read: 1 Kings 11-12; Ezekiel 5:5-8; Zechariah 1:1-6</i>

Church School Schedule

January 2	No Church School	January 5	Boy Jesus in the Temple
January 9	Memory Work – The Lord's Prayer	January 12	Memory Work- The Lord's Prayer
January 16	No Church School	January 19	The Beatitudes
January 23	The Beatitudes	January 26	Jesus turns water into wine – Whole Family
January 30	Jesus turns water into wine – Whole Family	February 2	Jesus raises Lazarus

Youth Group/Family Fun Activities

January 16th : Grades 6-12 Join Janie at LCC for a movie night from 4-6pm. Please bring a snack to share!

January 23rd: Board game night. Meet at LCC from 4pm-6pm for a night of board games. People of all ages are welcome to come. Please bring a board game and dish to share.

Caramel Roll Sunday! The youth will be serving Caramel Rolls on Sunday January 9th after the 10am worship service. This is a fundraiser for youth to raise money to go to camp and on mission trips. There is a suggested minimum donation of \$3 per roll. Thank you for supporting our youth!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
January 2022						1
2 9:00 Church School 10:00 Worship Service 11:00 Coffee 5pm Wed music practice	3 Needlework Group 9:30am	4 Staff Meeting 10am	5 Supper 5:15pm Church Service 6:15pm Church School 7pm Confirmation 7pm	6 7:30pm AA Mtg.	7 Wired Word 1:30pm	8
9 9:00 Church School 10:00 Worship Service 11:00 Coffee 5pm Wed music practice	10 Needlework Group 9:30am	11 Staff Meeting 10am Gather Bible Study 1:15pm	12 Book Club 1:30— Supper 5:15pm Worship 6:15pm School/ Confirmation 7pm	13 Quilting 1pm Church Council 6:30pm 7:30pm AA Mtg.	14 Wired Word 1:30pm Reports due for Annual Report	15
16 9:00 Church School 10:00 Worship Service 11:00 Coffee 5pm Wed music practice Youth Group Gr. 6-12 4-6pm	17 Needlework Group 9:30am	18 Staff Meeting 10am	19 Supper 5:15pm Church 6:15 7:00 School/ C onfirmation	20 Quilting 1pm 7:30pm AA Mtg.	21 Wired Word 1:30pm	22
23 9:00 Church School 10:00 Worship Service 11:00 Coffee 5pm Wed music practice 30 ANNUAL MEETING 9am Whole Family	24 Needlework Group 9:30am Knitting 1pm 31 Needlework Group 9:30am	25 Staff Meeting 10am	26 9:00 Women' Bible Study Supper 5:15pm Worship 6:15pm Whole Family Confirmation	27 Quilting 1pm 7:30pm AA Mtg.	28 Wired Word 1:30pm	29



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E-News

Worship Times:

Wednesday Worship
6:15pm (School year)
Church School 7pm
Confirmation 7pm

Sunday Worship
The River Service
10:00am
Church School 9:00 am

Lisa Ahlness, Pastor
Janie Hague, Deacon

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”**