



The Cross Word

December 2022

From Pastor Lisa

When I was a child, growing up in Bowman (a small town in southwestern ND), I used to love to pore over catalogs. This was in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the days when we had no big box stores, but we did have three large “wishbooks”: Sears, JC Penney, and Montgomery Ward. I could look at them and ponder fashion (what a hoot it would be to look at some of those fashions now!), and most of all, look at all the lovely toys. To us, that section was a virtual neon-lit Toys R Us store full of treasures! I remember one year as Christmas neared, when we were maybe 6 and 7 years old, my mother (no doubt in an attempt to keep us from being underfoot for a bit) suggested my brother and I write letters to Santa. We could go through the wish-books and find something to ask for.

What we actually did was lie on the floor in our pajamas, pencils in hand, and write: “Dear Santa, I want ____ and ____ and ____ and ____ for a whole page or more. We didn’t even pretend to be good, first, or ask after the elves or reindeer or even Mrs. Claus! My mother was mortified at the horrible greedy children we had proven ourselves to be and no doubt sent us out to build a snow fort or something

There are still some items in life that bring me joy, but it’s not really “stuff” I yearn for anymore. In fact, I find myself far more often saying ‘thank you’ instead of ‘I want’ as I look around me at the house and car and clothes and books and movies and food and music and every possible thing I could want – including health, beloved pets, and beloved people and the many, many gifts they add to my life. At church, my list of thanksgiving grows longer and longer.

At offering time, every time our tithes and offerings were gathered during worship, a colleague said a thanksgiving: “It is the gifts of our hands, feet, voices, and financial resources that enable God’s work to happen through us.”

In other words, it’s the sharing of treasures that we have first received from God that allow God’s work to happen through us.

Thank you for the many ways you have shared your treasures to bring blessing upon Lutheran Church of the Cross, one another, and our community. Thank you for the many ways you have shared your gifts beyond these to Camp of the Cross, the Western North Dakota Synod, our ELCA, hunger relief, disaster response, to the church around the globe. May God’s grace enfold you and Christ’s presence in your life strengthen you in all that you say and do, now and always.

Blessed Advent. And, soon...Merry Christmas!

Fellow Members of Church of the Cross,

Thank you to all who participated in the Endowment Fund survey. It was very helpful in establishing our Mission Statement, which now reads: *"To provide structure for members who have the ability and desire to benefit Lutheran Church of the Cross through charitable giving that is consistent with its mission of Making Jesus Known by Sharing Our Gifts."*

The mission of the Endowment Fund will be to provide a process that allows people to give a one-time or on-going gift or legacy to extend the mission of Christ's church. The application of the funds received and disbursed will be consistent with the by-laws, mission and purpose of Lutheran Church of the Cross.

As everyone knows, the financial markets have not been great these past few months and therefore our investments, via the ELCA Ministry Growth Fund, have also slumped some. When markets recover and we have meaningful interest disbursed to us, we will, in keeping with our by-laws and the congregation's survey wishes, make contributions to Community Outreach and Social Services, Support LCC Programs and Education (examples: worship and music, seminaries, colleges, students), ELCA and Synod Ministries (examples: Camp of the Cross, Campus Ministry), Congregational Development, Capital Improvements, Disaster Relief and other worthy designations.

Your church's endowment fund can accept all sorts of given assets including: cash, securities, real estate and gifts, as well as planned giving through bequests, life insurance, charitable gift annuities and IRA designation beneficiary.

One of the "painless" ways to contribute is via an IRA Charitable Rollover. If you are 72 $\frac{1}{2}$ or older, you can use the IRA charitable rollover to help 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 and direct them to make the distribution to LCC Mission Endowment Fund (contact Art Wheeler for more direction). 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 fund.

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 true endowment like LCC's Mission Endowment Fund.

Please remember, Endowment Fund contributions do not go toward the church's operational budget, which still needs your continual support in order to "keep the lights on"!

May God continue to bless you and this congregation,

Ken Will, Chairperson, Kerry Carpenter, Lisa Ahlness, Alex Spilman, Art Wheeler, Financial Secretary Rita Staloch, Recording Secretary

Christmas Services 2022

Christmas Eve

Prelude Music 4:45pm

Festive Service 5pm

Candlelight Service 10pm

Christmas Day

10am Pajamas and Christmas stories

Coffee & Cereal



Altar Focus for December Carrie Kids will be the Altar Focus for the month of December. A Christmas tree is set up in the narthex with jean ornaments listing the sizes of K–6th grade boys. Jeans are the primary focus with other items such as socks and underwear are needed. Carrie Kids is a local organization working with 150-200 children and adolescents weekly who are homeless or at risk with a variety of programs, events, groups to reach them.

Our second Altar Focus for December is Good Gifts, which is a program of our denomination, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We have catalogs available on the table by the fountain in the narthex, and ornaments on the small tree and a table in the narthex as well. You can choose something, make the appropriate donation to LCC and memo it “Good Gifts” (there are cute cards on the table for you to send the recipient as well), or you can do everything online at www.elca.org/goodgifts. These gifts are great teaching tools for kids (who are excited to know how the honeybees, or goat, or chicks they have given will help a family across the world live better), and perfect for the person who has everything! There is something to suit everyone’s interests, from animals, to tuition, to counseling, to vaccinations, to plants and trees, and much much more. Here’s a way to add meaning to your Christmas, and to someone else’s as well.

Angels Among Us

It would be surprising if you have not encountered this month’s angel at church: Paul Gurholt. Paul is a long time member at LCC, and has been very involved from the beginning. He always has a joke or a smile and has a mischievous streak (watch out for pranks!). He sang with the choir in years past and now sings with The River worship team (and is quite famous for certain solos at special times of year). Paul also sings with the Northern Lights Chorus and in barbershop quartets. He is the chief flipper of pancakes at our pancake-and-sausage breakfasts, and he is the “peach guy” – selling peaches in August for his service organization! Paul has headed up Gurholt Construction for many years, and is well known for a high standard of excellence in materials and workmanship. Not only a builder, though, Paul is also an artist. He designed the remodeling of the sanctuary and fellowship areas at Lutheran Church of the Cross, and created the pulpit, altar and baptismal font, as well as the reflection wall in the narthex (in memory of his wife, Marcia). All the work he put in (along with much labor done by other volunteer experts) no doubt saved the congregation a fortune in the complete remodel and expansion of the building a dozen years ago. He has also done a great deal of work at Camp of the Cross – in fact, CCM named the porch of the new fellowship center after him. He has also done some work recently in Medora, enhancing the experience of people who attend the Medora musical. Paul has a wonderful family and loves to travel and gather with them for destination vacations. He is also very proud of his grandchildren – some of whom are LCCers, too. We are grateful for the fun he brings to things, for Paul’s beautiful voice, and all the other gifts he so generously shares with us at LCC. Give Paul a thanks and a high five next time you see him!

Book Club Choices:

Meets the 2nd Wednesday at 1:30 in the Library.

December: The Lost Apothecary— by Sarah Penner

January: The Sunflower Sisters by Martha Hall Kelly



Heat the Church. We are grateful to you who have donated dollars in memory of loved ones to support this program. The calendars are out on the round table in the narthex. Thank you for being willing to donate extra funds to the church during our cold winters months. December—February \$25/day, March \$10/day.

Christmas Flowers for the Sanctuary It's December already! The Altar Guild is offering the poinsettias again this year. Traditions are important even in these trying times. Cost will be the \$15 a plant. The order blanks are found in the narthex and in the back of the church. Place the check and the slip in the offering plate or in the secretary's plastic bin next to her door. Please place the word "poinsettia" on the memo line. Thank you for helping to make the sanctuary beautiful for Christmas. Deadline is Dec. 20th.



"For unto us a child is born"



Deacon Janie's Corner



December 2022



Theology on Tap December 1st 7:00pm

21 or older? Join Janie at Thomas & Moriarty's to dive deeper into & life questions.

Confirmation Schedule

December	7	Service Project Night
	14	Small Group Night
	21	Large Group Night Theme: Christian Denominations <i>Please read: Matthew 16:13-20; John 17:6-21; Ephesians 2:1-22</i>
	28	No Large Group—Christmas Break
January	4	Large Group Night Theme: Creed Overview and Exploring Article 1 <i>Please read: Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:28-34 Genesis 1:1-2:25</i>

Church School Schedule

Sunday

December 4	Christmas Program Practice
December 11	Christmas Program Practice
December 18	Sunday and Wednesday Christmas Program practice at 9 am.
December 25	No Church School
January 1	No Church School

Wednesday

December 7	Christmas Program Practice
December 14	Christmas Program Practice
December 21	No Church School
December 28	No Church School
January 4	Boy Jesus in the temple

Children Youth and Family Events

December 4th and 11th: Middle School and High School Youth Group. Battle of the Pizzas: Join Janie at the church from 2pm-3pm to see who has the best pizza in town!

December 28th: Youth in Grades 8-12 are invited to join Janie for a late night “mock” in Lock-in from 7-10pm. Please let Janie know if your son/daughter is planning on attending.

Advent Dinners

Advent dinners are back! Confirmation students will be serving meals before each Wednesday Service in Advent. Stop in between 5:15 and 6:00pm for homemade soup and support a good cause. A free will offering will be taken to help raise funds for camp scholarships. The menu is as follows: **Dec. 7:** Chicken Noodle Soup with sweet rolls **Dec. 14:** Beef Barley Soup with rolls **Dec 21:** Knoephla Soup with rolls.

Men's Bible Study: LCC is starting a Men's Bible Study group that will meet on Saturdays at 10am at LCC. The dates for December are the 3rd, 10th, and 17th. We will take the last two Saturdays in December off to account for the holidays. Each week join in discussion around the Gospel text for that week. Come for coffee but stay for great discussion and fellowship.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
December 2022 Altar Focus: Carrie's Kids & Good Gifts						
4 9:15am Church School 10:00 River Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour Middle & High School Youth Grp 2pm	5 Needlework Group 9:00am	6 Staff Meeting 10am	7 5:15pm Advent Supper Worship Service 6:15pm Church School Confirmation 7pm	8 Church Council 6:30pm 7:30pm AA Mtg.	9 Wired Word 1:30pm	10 Men's Bible Study 10am
11 9:15 Church School 10:00 River Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour Middle & High School Youth Grp 2pm	12 Needlework Group 9:00am	13 Staff Meeting 10am	14 Book Club 1:30 Advent Supper 5:15pm Worship Service 6:15pm Church School / Confirmation 7pm	15 7:30pm AA Mtg.	16 Wired Word 1:30pm	17 Men's Bible Study 10am Christmas Program Practice 1pm
18 9:15 Church School 10:00 River Worship Christmas Program 11:00 Coffee Hour	19 Needlework Group 9:00am	20 Staff Meeting 10am	21 Advent Supper 5:15pm Worship Service 6:15pm No Church School / Confirmation 7pm	22 7:30pm AA Mtg.	23 Office closed	24 Christmas Eve Service 5pm 10pm Candle-light Service
25 Christmas Day 9:15 NO Church School 10:00 Christmas Stories 11:00 Breakfast Hour	26 Office closed	27 Staff Meeting 10am	28 No Services here Mock In Lock In Gr.8-12 7-10pm	29 7:30pm AA Mtg	30 Wired Word 1:30pm	31 New Years Eve



1004 E Highland Acres Rd
Bismarck ND 58501

701.223.1001
churchsecretary@midconetwork.com

E-News

Worship Times:

Wednesday Worship
6:15pm (School year)
Sunday Worship
The River Service
10:00am

Lutheran Church of the Cross

Lisa Ahlness, Pastor
Janie Hague, Deacon

Office Hours:

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

Making Jesus Known by Sharing our Gifts