



From Pastor Lisa

I've been struggling the last couple of weeks, partly coming out of the brain fog of Covid, and partly overwhelmed by the world. In the midst of this, I was struck by this essay by Sarah Bessey and wanted to share it with you:

I simply get to work on ordinary things.

This is all I know to do when I don't know what to do.

We go for a walk in the Saturday morning's cold. We pay attention to the snow dusting the tops of the mountains to the north and to the east of us: look at that, I say to the tinies in their toques, isn't it beautiful? We pass a bit of time with neighbours as we run into them. We can see our breath so we turn for home sooner than we planned. We draw pictures at the kitchen table after a lunch of grilled cheese and tomato soup.

I make a plan for the week's meals and then a list for the grocery store, carefully grouping each item by section. I load up the tinies and we go to the store, pushing the cart up and down aisles, piling in food for the week ahead. One tiny in the cart's little seat, one on my back, another holding to the side of the cart, we negotiate in the aisles over bags of chips and cereal boxes. Older women stop me to say, "you sure have your hands full," with a smile. I always smile back and nod, "yep, three in four years," I say. We drive home and unload the groceries. I slice their green grapes in half and give them each a plastic bowl. They plop their little bums on the floor to eat their snack.

Then, the baby back on my back in the baby carrier as usual, I get out the vacuum, and I drag it over the floor, sucking up every crumb and oops, a few stray Lego pieces. The tinies go outside to putter in the yard with their dad, digging in the dirt and pulling up logs and filling old sand buckets with worms. I move around our house, picking things up and putting them back where they belong: socks, books, more Lego pieces, permission slips, empty cups, inside-out shirts, toys, shoes, soothers.

One after another, everything is restored to its place and order slowly returns to this ordinary house. *The sun is sinking earlier and earlier with each passing day: today, I turn the lamps on at 4 o'clock. I get supper started and then when they come back inside, I huff at everyone about tracking in all that yard dirt on my clean floors. The sky is pitch dark by the time we sit down to eat as a family, just a regular old meal of burgers and oven french fries.*

After supper and clean-up, I dance the baby around the kitchen while the kids are dancing in the living room. We're spinning to something happy by Taylor Swift and yet, I'm wiping away hot tears while they twirl.

Happy children, happy children, God please, everyone should be happy children dancing in safe kitchens.

We measure them up against the wall, they're growing by leaps and bounds, I'll never be able to keep them in jeans. There is a bin of broken crayons in the basement and there are clean sheets on the beds. Then everyone has been scrubbed and lotioned and combed, now smelling lovely and getting sleepy. Warm babies in a warm home. I've clipped thirty tiny fingernails plus thirty tiny toenails now hiding in footie jammies. Hockey Night in Canada is on mute and I've got the baby down for her first shift of sleep, so the tinies get out their battered board books. They turn pages by the lamp-light of their own little routines and the glow of the hockey game on tv.

I don't know what to pray and I don't really know what to do.

The world seems like it's crashing around us, from all four corners of the world and right next door, too. We are afraid and we don't know what to do so we are turning the news on and off, scrolling constantly, pacing our minds. We are pontificating on social media and we are writing letters or emails. We are showing up for protests and demonstrations and vigils. We are getting mad at each other for all the ways we're all doing it wrong. Donating money, writing letters, feeling futile.

I imagine I'm not alone in feeling pretty powerless, angry, sad, and full of longing for peace right now. As Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg said, nobody's children should be killed, nobody's. But we can keep doing the ordinary work. So let's do that. So let's keep advocating wherever we can for an end to violence, humanitarian aid and relief. Let's keep praying for peace – even if it's only groaning - the Spirit knows. May peace be our journey.

See you in church, in person or from afar.

Pastor Lisa



November 2023

Autumn has arrived, and your church council thought that this would be a good time to share a glimpse of how LCC finances stand now, as we head into budgeting for next year. Year to date, our contributions are about 79% of the budget the congregation adopted. Of course, not having the second pastoral staff person since Deacon Janie left has helped our income/expense ratio somewhat, but naturally we hope to find the right person soon. Offerings are welcome and needed! They make possible the ministry we do, in our building and far beyond.

The cash flow of the past eleven weeks has caused some concern. Over these weeks, our contributions have averaged only 59.3% of our expenses.

We are lucky in that Church of the Cross has often been blessed to receive charitable gifts and Required Minimum Distributions (RMD's) during the last six weeks of the fiscal year. Those have helped dramatically for the church to end the year with a good general fund operating balance. It also helped our Church to make semi-annual contributions to the Western North Dakota Synod, Camp of the Cross, Heart River Lutheran Church, and Missouri Slope Care Center, among others; our partners in ministry.

Quite a few of our members have contributed of their finances, and the church is grateful. The church appreciates so very much all that has been contributed and "thanks you" very much. Many of our members are also generous with their time and talents, and that helps make LCC the giving, growing place we are. As you contemplate your financial offerings, year end charitable gifts, RMD's, and directing your Thrivent Choice dollars, we are glad that you hold LCC as valuable in your considerations. Together, LCC can begin 2024 with an adequate general fund operating balance.

The Lord has bestowed many blessings to us all. The council hopes, with everyone's help, that we can continue to serve our members, the community, and other partners in ministry. Thank you!

Together in Christ,
Arthur W Wheeler, Treasurer

Ecumenical Thanksgiving Eve Service at Faith Lutheran

A couple more churches have joined us as we gather the evening before to celebrate Thanksgiving and worship. We'll worship together with folks from Lord of Life Lutheran Church, McCabe Methodist Church, St. George's Episcopal Church, Faith Lutheran, and the United Church of Christ. The service will be held at Faith Lutheran Church, on Ave C between 14th and 15th Street, 7 pm on November 22nd. After worship we will have a pie social! (To this end, each church is asked to provide 5 pies. If you're a pie baker and would be willing to make one, let Pr. Lisa know!) The offering will go to Great Plains Food Bank, which supports food pantries and feeding ministries all over our state. Please bring an in-kind "protein" offering as well: canned meat/fish, beans or peanut butter. Our speaker will be from GPFB, and the items will be given to them. Come and give thanks for all our blessings!

YOU ARE INVITED

Please join us for a free Western North Dakota Synod event this November 4th. We will gather to take part in a Bible study, learn about mental health, take part in a panel discussion about ministry opportunities, and to do God's work together! This event will be held at Oak Valley Lutheran Church, 400 Main Street North in Velva, ND.

A Bible study will be lead by Dr. Michael Chan, Executive Director for Faith & Learning at Concordia College in Moorhead, MN. Dr. Chan joined the Concordia College community in June of 2022. Prior to that, he was Associate Professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN. He joined Luther Seminary after completing his Ph. D. at Emory University and a year of research and teaching at the University of Helsinki. He is a graduate of Luther Seminary (M.A. in Biblical Theology) and Pacific Lutheran University (B.A. in Elementary Education). As the Executive Director for Faith and Learning, Dr. Chan directs the Lorentzsen Center for Faith and Work and the Dovre Center for Faith and Learning, guides Concordia's interfaith relationships, and oversees the work of Campus Ministry. Dr. Chan was our guest speaker at the 2023 Synod Assembly.

Also joining us is Jason Hills, retired USAF and Certified Suicide Intervention Counselor. He comes highly recommended by Pastor Emily Nesdahl, from Christ Lutheran in Minot. Jason is a Veteran and has worked with both Veterans and active duty military who offers services and also educates civilians. He is certified in three different areas: depression, domestic violence, and music therapy. He is a self-proclaimed Christian and includes faith as a critical part of getting well.

Pastor Mark Narum, from Trinity Lutheran Church in Bismarck, will moderate a panel of ordained and lay leaders who will give insight into various areas of ministry in the synod. Some of the topics will include lay preaching, education available to those who have an interest in ministry, and what the future might look like in our synod.

Everyone is welcome to attend this FREE event! Lunch will be hosted by Oak Valley Lutheran Church, WND Lone Tree Conference, and Thrivent Financial.

Altar Focus: Teddy bears and Foster Hope

Our newest altar focus is "Foster Hope," which provides kids in foster care with clothes, suitcases, stuffed animals, and more. Many times, when a child is placed in foster care, they arrive with their belongings in a garbage bag, other times they have no belongings with them. This program aims to combat that and give these children something permanent they can take with them.

Needs: (from the founder, Tracey Preuss, an RN at Sanford) we could use kids clothes, books, blankets, and suitcases. All gently loved.

We put clothes in suitcases with a comfort item like books, a blanket and possibly a stuffed animal so kids will have clothes when they enter placement.

We also make birthday cake kits for families to make birthday cakes. Instead of oil and butter, they use sprite.

We could use:

- 1) Disposable pans
- 2) cake mixes
- 3) candles
- 4) balloons
- 5) birthday cards
- 6) sprite
- 7) frosting
- 8) sprinkles

Donations of backpacks are also welcome. This past august we handed out 345 backpacks with school supplies before school started!

Teddy Bears, Teddy Bears, Teddy Bears. Let's fill up the sanctuary with worshipping Teddy Bears who after a blessing will be ready to comfort a child hopefully through some tough moments of crisis. This Altar Focus is the special project we all love, spearheaded by Shiela Mugaas in memory of her cousin. At the end of November the bears will be distributed to first responders.

Cookie Walk and Caroling are back!!

Two of our favorite experiences! If you are a baker, sign up on the poster in the narthex to bring a couple dozen or more of your Christmas specialty. On Dec. 10, after worship, we will have all the cookies laid out in the multipurpose room, next to the kitchen. You will receive a container and can then choose your goodies. Cost is a donation, with a suggested price of minimum \$5 per dozen. We all get to taste different Christmas cookies, without baking them all ourselves! Win- win! Any left overs will be plated up to take with us that afternoon for **Christmas Caroling!** We will meet at the church at 2 pm, split into groups, and each make a few stops, with cookies to share with the folks we go to! Mark your calendars now, and dust off your baking gear!

Calling all Artists! Bulletin boards need YOU!

The seasons are changing, and the church seasons are, too! We have been enjoying the delightful fall bulletin board put up by Heather and Libby Martin. Thank you, ladies! Now - how about you? Are you a pinterest-er? Crafty? Artistic? Here's your chance to shine. We need upcoming bulletin boards for Advent (end of November), Christmas (unless your design works for both), and Epiphany (mid January)! Get together with a friend, if you like, and let Pr. Lisa know if you'd like to take one of these on!

First Communion Class Wednesday, Nov. 8, 7 pm

We have several young people who asked to do a first communion class this fall. We did meet once, but then realized there may be a few more who might like to join. The class is 2nd-4th graders. Please let Pr. Lisa know that your child would like to come, too. We'll meet again Wednesday, Nov. 8 at 7 pm. The students should all have watched the movie "The Prince of Egypt" first. You can stream it or borrow a DVD copy from Pr. Lisa.

Advent: Wednesday Worship and Meals - Cooking assistance needed!

In Advent - Wednesdays beginning November 29 – we will be serving meals at 5 pm – 6pm before worship at 6:15 pm. Pr. Lisa will be preparing the meal each week, but could use a co-cook, as Wednesdays are already busy. If you love to hang out in the kitchen and could spare a few hours on one or more Wednesdays, let the office or Pr. Lisa know! Worship in Advent will once again follow the beautiful Holden Evening Prayer liturgy. Come and experience it!





Please join us for our annual

COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING WORSHIP

*&
pie social*

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 22

7:00 pm

Faith Lutheran Church
1402 E Ave C, Bismarck

Featured speaker is Ron Walters from Great Plains Food Bank. All offerings will benefit their mission. Bring beans, peanut butter, or canned meat to donate!

Hosted in partnership by St. George's Episcopal Church, Bismarck
United Church of Christ, Lord of Life Lutheran, Lutheran Church of
the Cross, Faith Lutheran, and McCabe United Methodist



Western North Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

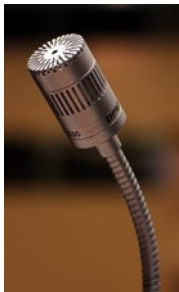
Inviting Volunteers
Western North Dakota Synod
Paul N. Marsh, CFRE, GSB Fundraising



For more than a decade, church clients have repeated the same challenge to me: volunteers are harder to recruit than ever before.

Volunteers are the backbone of any successful congregational ministry. What used to be called the 80/20 Rule (80% of the work is done by 20% of the people) is now 90/10 or worse. So how do you reverse this trend in your church?

We have talked in this space about the process to get a financial gift: we inform about what we are raising money for specifically, we inspire by answering the question why this project is so important, we invite a specific gift or gift commitment, and we thank the donor. The process for recruiting a volunteer is the same!



Prospective volunteers want to serve, but most are concerned about signing on for an endless term of service, being drawn into unrelated tasks for which they have no interest or ability, and being unsupported. When you address these concerns up front, you will have a far greater chance of success in recruitment.

We suggest preparing a one-pager that describes three to five specific tasks of the role, the specific term of service (usually one year except for council members), and email and phone numbers for leaders who will respond to questions or problems which may arise. Also nice to have are some quotes from those who have served in that role in the past, describing how meaningful the role was to them.



Finally, plan an exhaustive annual volunteer orientation and training program.

When you begin implementing this plan for recruitment, you will see an increase in dedicated volunteers.



Your LCC Mission Endowment Fund

The LCC Mission Endowment Fund was established as a permanent endowment fund, the purpose of which is to enhance the outreach and mission of LCC and to assist in specific capital or special expenses. Endowment funds are partnerships between donors and the church. Partnerships based on the idea of mutual stewardship. Endowment funds provide additional support for ministries and special projects beyond the yearly operating budget, as well as supporting the future generations of LCC.

Each year, the Endowment Committee will transfer a portion of the Endowment Fund's annual earnings, as dictated by its By Laws, to identified ministries for their use.

Gifts, to the Endowment Fund, made through your contributions, wills, and estate planning process extend financial support to the Endowment Fund. If possible, please consider discussing your gifts, confidentially, with a committee member in advance so we may work with you and ensure your intentions are honored.

Your financial gifts to the Endowment Fund are placed in a professionally managed portfolio (the ELCA Ministry Growth Fund). There is no minimum amount for a gift. All gifts from members and friends of LCC support and benefit the ministry and mission of LCC. LCC and its Endowment Fund are a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.

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.

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.

We invite you to explore the charitable giving opportunities available to you. Gifts, both cash and property, may be made as outright gifts or bequests, or by naming LCC as a beneficiary of a 401(k) or IRA, a life insurance policy, or a charitable trust.

Thank you for your faithfulness! Know that your generosity empowers LCC to **"Make Jesus Known By Sharing Our Gifts."** Please join us on Nov 5th, following service, for a brunch hosted by the Endowment Committee. Pastor Keith Pearson, Regional Gift Planner for the ELCA, will be joining us and will be available for conversation and to answer questions.

Ken Will, Chairperson 226.5670
Art Wheeler, Financial Secretary 527.9582
Rita Staloch, Recording Secretary 230.9057
Alex Spilman 934.1055

Kerry Carpenter 400.6000
Cherie Krueger 226.7514
Lisa Ahlness 220.9011

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

November: Someone Else's Shoes by JoJo Moyes

December: Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Gamus

January: The Reading List by Sara Nisha Adams

Consider coming to the Book Club. We have interesting and lively discussions of each book. A variety of subjects are read but usually works of fiction.

New Member Class date changed

If you or someone you know are interested in joining Lutheran Church of the Cross (or learning more about it), you are welcome to come to the new member class on Sunday, November 19th, following the worship service (about 11:15). Bring your coffee/treats and join Pastor Lisa in the Sunday school room right next to the youth room – a quick right turn in the hallway, if you were entering the church through the back door from the parking lot. We'll consult everyone's schedules and set the New Member Sunday accordingly! If someone you know has been contemplating this, please invite them!

CHURCH DIRECTORY

The **church directory** is out on the table in the narthex for your review. Have you removed your landline? Changed or added an email address? Moved? Had a child? If so, please add these things to your family's section. If nothing has changed just write OK, or your initials to your section and the secretary will know to keep the information as is. **Please note: we are doing a pictorial directory!!!** We are not using an outside source but will rely on the congregation to provide their own photos if able to do so. The church office would like individuals and families to submit a photo of yourself or family to the church secretary so that LCC can produce a pictorial directory online (not on LCC's website) through a secure web portal and also on paper. Please submit the jpeg photo electronically to: churchsecrary@midconetwork.com. Photos can be taken on your phone or camera. Take a selfie! Ask a neighbor to be your photographer! Come to the church and the secretary will take your photo. Take the 5 minutes to get this small project done so it can be completed by Thanksgiving! The secretary has received many photos and as they are received she is able to attach them to the printed directory that you will be receiving.

The quilters last day for 2023 is November 16.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
5 10:00 River Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	6 Needlework Group 9am Sweet Adelines	7	8 5:15p Supper 6:15p Worship 7p Church School, Confirmation, River	9 Quilting 1p 7:30pm AA Mtg	10 Wired Word 1:30pm	11 Veteran's Day Men's Bible Study 10am River practice 4p
12 10:00 River Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	13 Needlework Group 9am Sweet Adelines	14	15 Book Club 1:30pm 5:15p Supper 6:15 Worship 7p Church School, Confirmation, River	16 Gather Study 10:30a Quilting 1p C. Council 6:30 Theology on Tap 7pm	17 Wired Word 1:30pm	18 Men's Bible Study 10am River practice 4p
19 10:00 River Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour/ New member class	20 Needlework Group 9am Sweet Adelines	21	22 9a Women's Bible Joint Thanksgiving Service @ Faith Lutheran 7pm	23 Thanksgiving Office closed 7:30pm AA Mtg.	24 Office closed	25 Men's Bible Study 10am River practice 4p
26 10:00 Worship Service 11:00 Coffee Hour	27 Needlework Group 9am Knitting 4 Oth- ers 1:30pm Sweet Adelines	28	29 5:15p Supper 6:15p Worship 7p Church School, NO Confirmation, River	30 7:30pm AA Mtg		



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

Lisa Ahlness, Pastor

Office Hours:

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

Making Jesus Known by Sharing our Gifts