

Lutheran Church of the Cross
1004 E Highland Acres Rd.
Bismarck ND 58501

Phone: 223-1001

Website: www.churchofthecross.org

Winter Hours. Mon.– Thursday 8–4pm Fri 8 to noon

Summer Office Hours: Mon.- Fri. 8:00 am—noon

Staff:

Lisa Ahlness, **Pastor**

Cell: 220.9011 / lisaahlness@hotmail.com

Connie Werner, **Secretary** cell 400.5852

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Joel Crane, **Wednesday Worship Coordinator**

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Gerri Sarsten, Joel and Jan Gilbertson, Beth Greff **Accompanists**

2023 Church Council Members

Mike Humann, President mknhumann@bis.midco.net 527.3376

Janice Martin, Vice President msladyj2000@gmail.com 471.5600

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“Making Jesus Known By Sharing Our Gifts”

The River

A Blended Worship Service



Lutheran Church of the Cross
December 17, 2023

“Making Jesus Known By Sharing Our Gifts”

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE CROSS
“The River” Worship Service
Third Sunday in Advent
December 17, 2023

WE COME TOGETHER

You are invited to sing with the Worship Team as we gather for worship. All songs and worship liturgy will be projected on the screens for your use.

PRELUDE MUSIC

“Bethlehem Wind”, “Christmas Amazing Grace”, “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduction of new members

SONG: *“Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah” v1, v2, v3*

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

GREETINGS OF PEACE

PRAYER OF THE DAY

OUR CONFESSION, GOD’S FORGIVENESS

GATHERING SONG: *“Good Christians Friends, Rejoice”*

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

WE HEAR GOD’S WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;

The **directory** is out in the narthex with a limited printing. Copies will be made as needed.

There is a **laundry basket** located out in the annex for our members to donate winter gear for those that go without. Collecting used or new hats, mittens, gloves, & scarves. Thank you for your contribution to our community! The basket will remain in the narthex until warm weather arrives again. Kathryn Spilman takes the donated items and distributes them to the library patrons that go without warm gear.

We will be once again collecting **boys blue jeans for Carrie’s Kids**. The tree is decorated with tags listing sizes that are needed. If you are an early shopper or a late shopper the jeans will be distributed just before Christmas to Carrie’s Kids and also after Christmas. The jeans do not have to be wrapped just placed under the tree. Thank you for your willingness to share your blessings with this ministry.

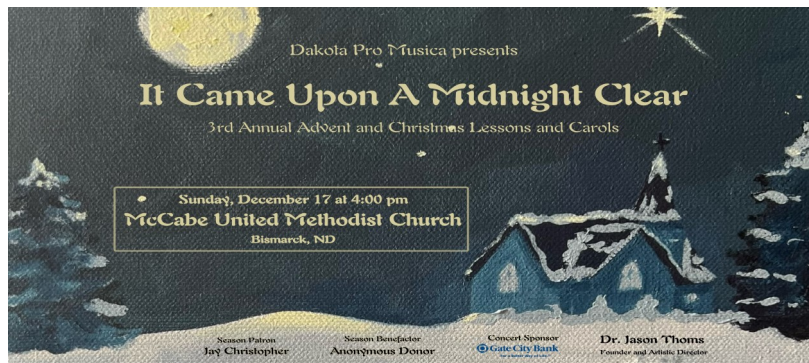
The **poinsettia order forms** are at the back of the church and next to the church directory/heat the church calendars. *This is your last day to order!* Please fill the form out and return it to the plastic bin next to the secretary’s office or place it in the offering plate.

The **two bathroom doors** just off of the narthex have had some remodeling done to them. They are in the process of becoming handicap accessible. When an electrician is available they will electrify the doors to make them easily accessible. Meanwhile the push buttons both inside and outside are marked as out of order. Until then just keep using them as always. Speaking of bathrooms did you know you don’t have to turn on the lights in there? They turn on automatically and off as well.

Thank you to all who participated in the children’s program this morning.

The office will be *closed Monday, December 25, 2023.*

Dakota Pro Musica is partnering with McCabe United Methodist Church in Bismarck to present a special Nine Lessons and Carols service on Sunday, December 17th at 4:00 pm. The service of **Nine Lessons and Carols** was created in 1918 for King's College in Cambridge, and uses scripture readings from the fall of Adam to the Birth of Christ to create a beautiful Advent and Christmas experience. The choir will present various choral anthems and carols that reflect on the scripture readings. There will also be several congregational Carols sung including: "Once In Royal David's City", "It Came Upon Midnight Clear", "Silent Night", and "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing". The service is open to the community, and a freewill donation will be collected. Dakota Pro Musica, is a professional choral ensemble based in Bismarck, and provides "Building Community" concerts across Central North Dakota. The Founder and Artistic Director is Dr. Jason Thoms, who is also the Director of Choral Activities at Bismarck State College. You can find out more about Dakota Pro Musica at dakotapromusica.org.



Did you notice the beautiful **Advent bulletin board** as you came in the back door? Lillian Crook designed and created the bulletin board. Thank you Lillian.

The church has **two office chairs** for the taking. Call the church office and they are yours. Or better yet take them on Sunday.

Heat the Church The calendar has been placed on the round table in the narthex. December through February is \$25 day. March \$10 Choose the date(s) that have special meaning in the lives of your families. Donate in the memory of someone, or acknowledge a special event or purpose. Donations may be mailed or one may choose to use electronic giving. Thank you for continuing this tradition.

²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;

³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

⁸For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 126

¹When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.

²**Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."**

³The LORD has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.

⁴**Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.**

⁵May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.

⁶**Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.**

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to Lutheran Church of the Cross, and to "The River" Blended Worship Service this morning! If you are visiting with us today, please take a moment to sign the guestbook in the narthex.

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

The **reports for the Annual Meeting** scheduled for Jan. 21 are due January 10 by noon. Send them electronically to churchsecretary@midconetwork.com. The Annual Report booklet needs to be handed out one week prior to the scheduled event.

THANK YOU to all of the volunteer workers and eaters as well that participated in donating your time/food items plus the financial gifts of money. \$28,010 was raised towards the purchase of the tractor for Camp of the Cross. **Hallelujah!!** Check out the photos of the event in the narthex.

The **Cookie Walk** was also a huge success. \$1200 was raised for the Heaven's Helpers Soup Kitchen. Thank you to all who baked and bought and taste tested!

New members being received today are: Emmeline Chopourian Jack, Beth & Francis Greff, Dawn Hildebrant, Kelsea & Austin Jamtgaard, Jaxon, Rhett and Stella, Henry & Margaret Lebak, Marvin & Katie Leer, Doug & Heidi Nelson, Nora, Belle, Tate and Ford. Please greet them and invite them to join in your favorite activities at church.



WEEKLY CALENDAR of December 17, 2023

Today, December 17:	River Service 10:00am Christmas Program New member Sunday Coffee 11:00am
Monday, December 18:	Stitching Group 9am
Tuesday, December 19:	
Wednesday, December 20:	Supper 5:00pm Worship Service 6:15pm Church School 7:00pm River practice 7pm
Thursday, December 21:	AA Meeting 7:30pm
Friday, December 22:	
Saturday, December 23:	Men's Bible Study 10:00am River practice 4pm
Sunday, December 24:	River Service 10:00am Coffee 11:00am 4:30/5:00pm Christmas Eve 10:00pm Candlelight Service

Future Events

Annual Meeting January 21, 2024

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: *"Glory to God"*

GOSPEL READING: John 1:6-8, 19-28

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"
as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

“O Come All Ye Faithful” ELW #283

“O Little Town of Bethlehem” ELW #279

“The First Noel” ELW #300

“Go Tell It On The Mountain” ELW #290

“Angels We Have Heard on High” ELW #289

SONG OF THE DAY: “Joy to the World” ELW #267

APOSTLES’ CREED

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH: “*Let Us Pray for Peace*”

SHARING OF THE PEACE

OFFERING: “*Christmas Offering*”

OFFERING PRAYER

WE SHARE THE MEAL

PREPARATION FOR THE MEAL

LORD’S PRAYER “*Lord’s Prayer*”

INVITATION TO OUR LORD’S SUPPER

COMMUNION SONG: “*All is Well*”

COMMUNION BLESSING/POST COMMUNION PRAYER

BENEDICTION: “*Final Blessing*” (Holden Evening Prayer)

SENDING SONG: “*Christ Be Our Light*”

DISMISSAL: “*Joy to the World*”

Introduction “Rejoice always,” begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. “All God’s children got a robe,” go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God’s party.

“THE RIVER” WORSHIP MINISTERS

Pastor—Pastor Lisa Ahlness

Scripture Reader—Ken Will

Greeters—Verlaine Jahner

Ushers—Keven & Janice Martin,

Communion Assistants—Roger & Esther Anderson, Kay Koch

Faith & Care— Kim & Mike Humann, Deb & Rod Sargent

Altar Guild—Jean Kraft, Donna Belisle, Cheryl Neu, Cherie Krueger

River Worship Team—

Sound Board Technicians— Larry Wolf

Projection Team— Caden Kunze, Jace Kunze, Rod Sargent, Art Wheeler

Streaming Team— Mark Kunze, Karen Will

River Singers— Deb Carpenter, Kerry Carpenter, Marlene Grabow, Sally Grenz, Paul Gurholt, Doug Johnson, Cherie Krueger, AJ Marx, Amanda Sagsveen, John Saylor, Tom Wade, Barb Wilson

Guitarists—Tom Wade

Percussionist— Kari Harris

Violinist—Fynn Sagsveen

Flutist—Beth Greff

Accompanists—Jan & Joel Gilbertson, Gerri Sarsten, Beth Greff

Prayers, Births, Deaths, Concerns

Please contact Connie in the church office if you have a prayer request, or if you will be entering the hospital and would like a pastoral visit.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

(We encourage you to take this list home and pray for these people.)

For those struggling with health and other concerns:

Reece Fischer, Tracy Martinson, Ann Hillesland, Erwin and Linda Marson, Arlene Wolff, Bob Roesler, Earl Larson, Nancy Dockter, Lori Marx, Hattie Martinson, Carter Weigel, Kerry Carpenter, Josey Hanson, Mary Ternes, Jeff Thomas, Jean King, Jim Miller, Heidi Renner, Peg Ahlness, Jacob Walby, Kristy Forrest, JoDee Saylor, Colter Lee, Arvid Mugaas

For those dealing with the death of these loved ones—