



From Pastor Lisa

So if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 2 Corinthians 5:17

We got a new puppy.

Have you ever had – or met – a puppy?

Bart is a long legged furry ball of boundless energy. It is fun to look at the world through his eyes (as well as I can imagine it, anyway). Everything he encounters, he encounters with his full self. All things are new, and each new thing is to be sniffed, tasted, pulled on, raced around rapidly several times, and often exclaimed about out loud. He is exuberant in his loving and in his zest for all things new. He grows and learns so much, every day.

I rather envy some of what I see in him. The energy, of course! (I am sleep deprived, because babies – even with fur – don't sleep through the night yet.) But also the willingness to encounter and immediately engage with new things. What I might experience as an obstacle would never seem so to him – just another big hill to clamber over! What fun!

There is a lot in the world, around us and afar off, to be sad or angry or alarmed about; plenty to make us feel hopeless or depressed. We need comfort – and then we don't want to budge from our comfortable places, surrounded by comfortable people. It feels like it would be best just to build walls around them and stay safe inside. We lose the willingness, energy, even ability to be open to newness, otherness.

I think of the verse above, though, in 2nd Corinthians 5. Here is the key. I can't change myself....but Christ can! Through Christ's love, I'm a whole new person. The box that I see myself in; that everyone else sees me in, can't contain me now. It is not my prison or even my home. The things that I did; the things that trapped me don't have to hold me down anymore. Christ gives me new eyes to see everything and everyone in a whole new way – even myself.

We are about to enter into Lent. It is a time of reflection, repentance (which in the greek means "to turn around; to change one's mind") and renewal. May it be a time that we allow Jesus to turn us around to see with new eyes. Peace to you on the journey.

As my colleague used to say as he blessed each child who came up to the communion rail: "Remember you are baptized – and Jesus loves you, just the way you are!"

Worship with us this Lent! Ash Wednesday is on Valentine's Day this year, which makes it easy to remember! We will mark it and every Wednesday with a **soup and bread supper** ahead of worship, starting at 5 pm, served by our Faith and Care groups. (There is always chicken noodle soup available, if you have picky young ones, along with a special soup of the week.) Ash Wednesday worship will begin at 6:15 pm, and includes imposition of ashes and communion.

In our **Wednesday Lenten series**, coordinated by Deb Carpenter, we will be presenting the faith stories of some of members of our faith family in this congregation. We are honored that people are willing to step forward and share how faith and prayer shaped their lives and the very structure of this church! We will hear how God's hand was revealed in life events where someone didn't expect, how prayer radically changed someone's path, and how the actions of others showed God's love in some dark times. There will be one faith story presented each Wednesday, beginning on February 21, 2024. **Worship begins at 6:15 pm and will be livestreamed.** We hope you can join us for these powerful messages!

The Concordia Choir Returns to Bismarck The Concordia College Choir, directed by Dr. Michael Culloton, will be in concert at Trinity Lutheran Church (3rd St. and Ave B in downtown Bismarck) on Saturday, March 2nd, at 4 p.m. Tickets are available right here in the church office, at Eckroth Music, online at ConcordiaTickets.com, and at the door. This choir is fantastic, and we are thrilled their tour is stopping in Bismarck. And, bonus: one of our very own LCC "church kids", Duncan Tufte, sings with the choir! Don't miss your chance to hear them, and in a fantastic church venue to boot. Invite your friends!

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

February: Other Birds by Sarah Addison Allen

March: Good Night Irene by Luis Alberto Urrea

April: The Paris Daughter by Kristen Harmel

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.

Angels Among Us Our angels this month are the Long family! Scot and Melissa have been very active over the years. Currently Scot is serving on the church council and as their liaison to the endowment committee, and Melissa serves on the nominating committee. She also is a great photographer, and is willing to be called upon for confirmation pictures and other memorable events! The Longs are willing ushers and communion assistants and serve with Faith and Care as well. Kieffer, their son, is off doing great things at college. Kambree is a Century High student, and with Melissa, will be doing the narthex bulletin board for Lent. We appreciate you, Long family!

Altar Focus This month we will collect feminine hygiene products and diapers/wipes (all sizes) for area pantries which assist moms and women in need.

Also! Feb. 14 (yes, Valentine's Day, and also Ash Wednesday!) is the beginning of Lent, when we traditionally do our "Sweet Deal for CAR" project. Take a tube of mini m+ms, enjoy the sweet treat, and then fill the plastic tube with your donation of change (note of interest: it will hold \$14 in quarters perfectly!) bills, or a check, and bring it back to the offering plate. We will continue this project, which supports our sister Lutheran church in the Central African Republic, until Easter.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
February 2024 Altar Focus: Feminine hygiene products, diapers, wipes, and CAR				1 18 Quilting 1p AA Mtg 8pm	2 Wired Word 1:30pm	3 Men's Bible Study 10am
4 10:00 River Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	5 Needlework Group 9am	6	7 5:00p Supper 6:15p Worship 7p Church School, Confirmation, River practice	8 Quilting 1pm- Church Council 6:30pm AA Mtg 8pm	9 Wired Word 1:30pm	10 Men's Bible Study 10am
11 10:00 River Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	12 Needlework Group 9am	13	14 Ash Wednesday Book Club 1:30pm 5:00 Lenten Supper 6:15 Worship 7 Church School, NO Confirmation, River	15 Quilting 1p AA Mtg 8pm Theology on Tap 7pm Thomas & Moriarty's	16 Wired Word 1:30pm	17 Men's Bible Study 10am
18 10:00 River Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	19 President's Day Office closed	20	21 5:00 Lenten Supper 6:15 Worship 7 NO Church School, Confirmation, River	22 Quilting 1pm AA Mtg. 8pm	23 Wired Word 1:30pm	24 Men's Bible Study 10am
25 10:00 River Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour	26 Needlework Group 9am Knitting 4 Others 1:30pm	27	28 Women's Bible 9 5 Lenten Supper 6:15 Worship 7p Church School, Confirmation, River	29 Quilting 1pm AA Mtg. 8pm	30 Wired Word 1:30pm	



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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—noon
Mon.—Fri

Making Jesus Known by Sharing our Gifts