

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

**Phone: 223-1001**

**Website: [www.churchofthecross.org](http://www.churchofthecross.org)**

**Winter Hours: Mon.– Thursday 8–3pm Fri 8 to noon**

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

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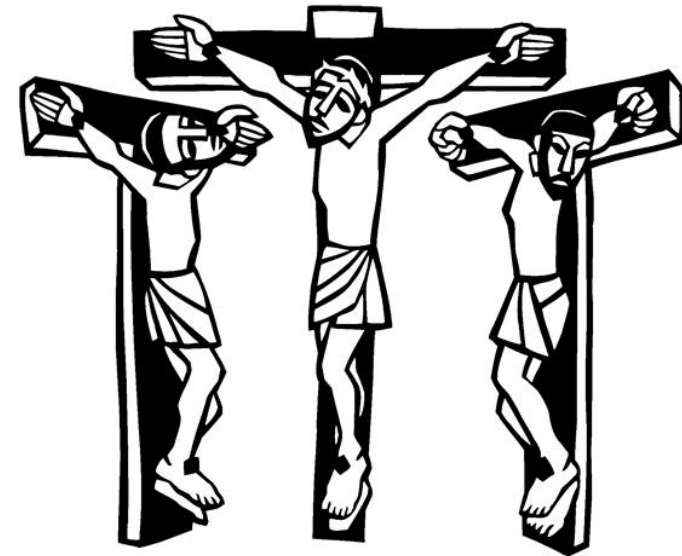
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*“Making Jesus Known By Sharing Our Gifts”*

# *The River*

A Blended Worship Service



**Lutheran Church of the Cross  
November 23, 2025**

“Making Jesus Known by Sharing our Gifts”

# LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE CROSS

## November 23, 2025

### *We Come Together*

#### Introduction

Jeremiah's promise of the execution of "justice and righteousness in the land" finds ironic fulfillment in the execution of Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. It appears utterly contradictory that a king should be crucified with a criminal. This victory appears for all the world as humiliating defeat. Yet through the gate of death Jesus opens the door to paradise.

**PRELUDE:** "He is Exalted ", "Light of the World "

**WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**GREETINGS OF PEACE**

**OUR CONFESSION, GOD'S FORGIVENESS**

**GATHERING SONG:** "You Are My King (Amazing Love) "

**CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

### *We Hear God's Word*

**FIRST READING: Jeremiah 23:1-6**

*Coming of the shepherd and righteous Branch who will execute justice*

<sup>1</sup> Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the Lord. <sup>2</sup> Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the Lord.

**Parents and Grandparents**— our annual **Children's Christmas Program** planning is underway and we would love if your family could be a part of this tradition. The program will be on 12/21. Sign-up flyers are in the back of church. Contact Sarah Dahl with questions. 701-226-6844

We are collecting the following items for **Foster Hope**: snack packs, fruit snacks, crackers/cheese packs for children, and warm coats, boots, hats, gloves and scarves of all sizes.

We are in need of **office volunteers** while Connie Werner recovers from knee surgery. If you have an hour or two here or there, would you be willing to assist by answering the phone in the church office, taking messages, and being a friendly face to greet those who stop in? If so, please sign up on the clipboard near the hallway to the bathrooms, or call the church office to indicate your availability.

Come experience the beautiful liturgy and music of **Holden Evening Prayer** in worship at 6:15 pm on Wednesdays in Advent: December 3rd, 10th and 17th. The theme of these worship services will be "The Power of Yes":

Our annual **Cookie Walk** will be held on **Sunday, December 14th**. Get out your favorite recipes and dust off your cookie sheets! We invite bakers to sign up, as we need at least 10-15 bakers to make a go of this. If you'd like to utilize our **Thrivent Grant** for the purchase of your ingredients please contact Sally Grenz. 701-390-3049

Join us for some fun-filled evenings of fellowship, flavor, and friendly competition at our **Chili Cook Off** and **Knoephla Soup Cook Off** followed by a **Holiday Hor d'oeuvres Pot Luck** throughout **Advent**. Bring your best recipes or simply come to sample.

Wednesday, December 3rd: Chili Cook Off

Wednesday, December 10th: Knoephla Soup Cook Off

Wednesday, December 17th: Holiday Hor d'oeuvres PotLuck

**Heat the Church** is once again being offered to recognize loved ones' birthdays, wedding anniversaries, and other significant dates in your family. The money raised will go towards LCC utilities. The sign-up sheet is in the narthex— thank you to all who participate!

## 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.

Your offerings have allowed the Church Council to approve an increase in benevolences to help support feeding ministries within our community this month. **The Emergency Food Pantry, Dream Center, Soup Café, and Ministry on the Margins** expressed gratitude for the donations in this time of great need. This support will allow them to serve more families in the days to come. Thank you for helping to share God’s love.

**Book Club Choices:** Meets the 2nd Wednesday at 1:30pm in the Library. Led by Marjo Hewitson followed by her fearless readers.  
December—“When Breath Becomes Air” by Paul Kalanihi  
January —“All the Colors of the Dark” by Chris Whitaker  
February—“The Briar Club” by Kate Quinn

**FIND YOUR BALANCE** Stress Relief & Support, a monthly stress management offering held at UCC the third Thursday Sept. 28 through April 16. 6:00-7:15 pm.

**Jesus & Women Bible Study:** 12/3, 12/7, 1/7 at 7:00 in Youth Room

**The November and December Sunday Worship Duties** are now scheduled. The schedules have been sent out electronically. Copies are also on the round table in the narthex. No reminders will be sent out during the secretary’s absence.

The order form for the **Christmas poinsettias** is out. You’ll find it in the narthex and/or at the back of the church. When completed please place it in the offering plate or in the secretary’s plastic bin next to her door.

**Coffee and pie servers** are needed for the pie social after the Ecumenical Thanksgiving Worship Service. Please let Pastor Lisa know if you can help.

<sup>3</sup> Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. <sup>4</sup> I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall no longer fear or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the Lord.

<sup>5</sup> The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>6</sup> In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: “The Lord is our righteousness.”

### **RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 46**

I will be exalted among the nations. (*Ps. 46:10*)

<sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

<sup>2</sup> **Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved,  
and though the mountains shake in the depths of the sea;**

<sup>3</sup> though its waters rage and foam,  
and though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

<sup>4</sup> **There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy habitation of the Most High.**

<sup>5</sup> God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be shaken;  
God shall help it at the break of day.

<sup>6</sup> **The nations rage, and the kingdoms shake;  
God speaks, and the earth melts away.**

<sup>7</sup> The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

<sup>8</sup> **Come now, regard the works of the LORD,  
what desolations God has brought upon the earth;**

Psalm 46 continued:

<sup>9</sup> behold the one who makes war to cease in all the world;  
who breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the shields with fire.  
<sup>10</sup> “Be still, then, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.”  
<sup>11</sup> The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob<sup>l</sup> is our stronghold.

SECOND READING: Colossians 1:11-20

*Hymn to Christ, firstborn of all creation; peace through his blood*

<sup>11</sup> May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, so that you may have all endurance and patience, joyfully <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. <sup>13</sup> He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, <sup>16</sup> for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. <sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup> and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION SONG: “Jesus Messiah”

WEEKLY CALENDAR of November 23, 2025

|                         |                                                                                   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Today, November 23:     | 9:00 am River Practice<br>10:00 am River Service<br>11:00 am Coffee Hour          |
| Monday, November 24:    | 9:00 am Stitching Group<br>1:30 pm Knitting For Others<br>Sweet Adelines Practice |
| Tuesday, November 25:   | 7:00pm Ecumenical Worship @ LCC<br>Pie Social to Follow                           |
| Wednesday, November 26: | No Evening Worship                                                                |
| Thursday, November 27:  | Happy Thanksgiving– Office Closed<br>7:00 pm AA Meeting                           |
| Friday, November 28:    | Office Closed                                                                     |
| Saturday, November 29:  | 10:00 am Men’s Bible Study                                                        |
| Sunday, November 30:    | 9:00 am River Practice<br>10:00 am River Service<br>11:00 am Coffee Hour          |

Upcoming Events:  
Nov. 25 7:00 pm Ecumenical Thanksgiving Worship at Church of the Cross



# Seasoned with Joy

## Advent Food and Fellowship

**DECEMBER 3:**

### Chili Cook-Off

- Competitors: Please have your chili at the church by 5:00 p.m.
- Connoisseurs (all are welcome): tasting and voting begin at 5:15 p.m.



**DECEMBER 10:**

### Knoephla Cook-Off

- Competitors: Please have your knoepla at the church by 5:00 p.m.
- Connoisseurs (all are welcome): tasting and voting begins at 5:15 p.m.

**DECEMBER 17:**

### Hors d'oeuvres Potluck

- Bring your favorite holiday hors d'oeuvres or snack to share in the potluck-style meal.
- No voting--- purely fellowship



## GOSPEL READING: Luke 23:33-43

*Jesus is crucified between two thieves: you will be with me in Paradise*

<sup>33</sup> When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>34</sup> [[Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."]] And they cast lots to divide his clothing. <sup>35</sup> And the people stood by watching, but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" <sup>36</sup> The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine <sup>37</sup> and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" <sup>38</sup> There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

<sup>39</sup> One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" <sup>40</sup> But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?" <sup>41</sup> And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." <sup>42</sup> Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom." <sup>43</sup> He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

**Organizers: Sarah Dahl: 226-6844 and Janet Bassingthwaite: 391-1058**

SERMON   Pastor Lisa Ahlness

SONG OF THE DAY: “Crown Him With Many Crowns”   ELW 855

OFFERING PRAYER

APOSTLES’ CREED

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

SHARING OF THE PEACE

OFFERING SONG: “Lift High the Cross”

***WE SHARE THE MEAL***

PREPARATION FOR THE MEAL

LORD’S PRAYER

INVITATION TO OUR LORD’S SUPPER

COMMUNION SONG: “We Fall Down”

COMMUNION BLESSING/POST COMMUNION PRAYER

BENEDICTION

SENDING SONG: “Soon and Very Soon “

**“THE RIVER” and “LIVING WATER” WORSHIP MINISTERS**

**Pastor**—Pastor Lisa Ahlness  
**Scripture Reader**— Janet Doerner  
**Communion Assistants**—Doug Johnson, Esther & Roger Anderson  
**Ushers**—Daniel McKinney, Marylee Gregware, Steve and Cheryl Neu  
**Altar Guild**—Cherie Krueger, Kelly Olson, Verlaine Jahner  
**Faith and Care Group 2**— Sheila Seuss & Josh Hocker, Sheila & Ron Koffler  
**River Worship Team**—  
    **Sound Board Technicians**— Larry Wolf, Karen Will.  
    **Projection Team**— Jace Kunze, Val Kunze, Rod Sargent, Art Wheeler  
    **Streaming Team**— Mark Kunze, Karen Will, Art Wheeler  
    **River Singers**— Joel Crane, Mike Geiermann, Marlene Grabow, Sally Grenz,  
                        Paul Gurholt, Doug Johnson, Cherie Krueger, AJ Marx, Kathy Morrison, Mark  
                        Murie, Deb Patterson, Amanda Sagsveen  
    **Percussionist**— Kari Harris  
    **Violinist**—Fynn Sagsveen  
    **Accompanists**—Luke Weber, Gerri Sarsten, Jan & Joel Gilbertson, Eve Kath  
    **Sunday Worship Coordinator**—Peder Gulleson

**Living Water Worship Team**  
    **Living Water Singers**—Caroline Collins, Keira Collins, Joel Crane,  
                                        Annabelle Ellison, Brandi Ellison, Amanda Sagsveen  
    **Percussionist**—Kari Harris  
    **Guitarists**— Kolton Harris, Joel Crane, Peder Gulleson  
    **Accompanist** —Luke Weber  
    **Sound**—Peder Gulleson  
    **Wednesday Worship Coordinator**—Joel Crane

A special thank you to the families that have sponsored **“Heat the Church”** in November: Pastor Lisa Ahlness, Cherly Neu, Dawn Slag, Sheila Sues and Josh Hocker, and Art Wheeler

**Prayers**  
**For those struggling with health and other concerns:**  
Tracy Martinson, Earl Larson, Nancy Dockter, Hattie Martinson, Carter Weigel, Josey Hanson, Heidi Renner, JoDee Sayler, Diane Klein, Libby Martin, Kira Willadsen, Kerry Carpenter, Sher Harildstad, Shirley Holder, Jerry Hanson, Joyce Wahl, Jeff Christian-son, Arvid Mugaas, Pete Barrette, Heather Martin, Katie Leer, Daryl Hodnefield, Lorna Mathais, Jagger Lindsey, Sandy Drevecky, Emmett Wolf, Peg Ahlness, Don Becker, Connie Werner, Dave Kunze, Marvin Leer, Katie Leer, Jim Kennedy

**For those dealing with the death of these loved ones:**  
Jackie Kraft Kolpack, Keaton Westlake, John Hertzgard, Judi Fockler