

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

Phone: 223-1001

Website: www.churchofthecross.org

Winter Hours: Mon.– Thursday 8–3pm 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

Office 223-1001 / churchsecretary@midconetwork.com

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527-9582/ lcctreasurer@midconetwork.com

Sarah Dahl, 226.6844/sarahdahlmba@gmail.com

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2025 Church Council Members

Scot Long, President, scotglong@gmail.com 400.2169

Mike Geiermann, Vice President, mgeiermann12@gmail.com 471.5122

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“Making Jesus Known By Sharing Our Gifts”

The River

A Blended Worship Service



**Lutheran Church of the Cross
December 7, 2025**

“Making Jesus Known by Sharing our Gifts”

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE CROSS

December 7, 2025

We Come Together

At the heart of our Advent preparation stands John the Baptist, who calls us to repent and make a new beginning. As the darkness increases we turn toward the approaching light of Christ. For Christians he is the root of Jesse, the righteous judge who welcomes all, especially the poor and meek of the earth. We wait with hope for that day when the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and there will be no more hurt or destruction. From the Lord's table we are sent in the spirit of John the Baptist to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of God has come near.

PRELUDE: “Baptized in Water”, “Hosanna (Praise is Rising)”

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GREETINGS OF PEACE

SONG: Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE The Jamtgaard Family

OUR CONFESSION, GOD'S FORGIVENESS

GATHERING SONG: “Shall We Gather at the River”

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

We Hear God's Word

FIRST READING: Isaiah 11:1-10

From David's line, a ruler bringing justice and peace

¹ A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. ² The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³ His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

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 by December 17th.

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 the families that have sponsored days.

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. Contact Sarah Dahl with questions. 701-226-6844.

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. A few afternoons coming up are open.

Come experience the beautiful liturgy and music of **Holden Evening Prayer** in worship at 6:15 pm on Wednesdays in Advent: December 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. There are still some ingredients available in the kitchen. Take what you will use.

Christmas Carolers will be visiting members on **December 14th, 2-3pm**. Meet at the church 2:00 and return to church for hot chocolate and fellowship.

Join us for some fun-filled evenings of fellowship, flavor, and friendly competition at our **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 10th: Knoephla Soup Cook Off

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

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.

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

Jesus & Women Bible Study: 12/10, 1/7 at 7:00 in Youth Room

Longest Night Worship

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21 @ 4PM

Faith Lutheran Church - 1402 E Ave C, Bismarck

This worship service is for all those who are grieving or struggling during the holiday season. In song, prayer, and contemplation, we offer our grief to God, trusting that we are held. There is space here for you.



This service is hosted by Bismarck United Church of Christ, First Lutheran Church of Mandan, Faith Lutheran Church, Lutheran Church of the Cross, St. George’s Episcopal Church, and Soul 57.



He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear,⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist and faithfulness the belt around his loins. ⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them. ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder’s den. ⁹ They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

May the righteous flourish; let there be an abundance of peace. (*Ps. 72:7*)

¹ Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the king’s son;
² **that he may rule your people righteously and the poor with justice;**
³ that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people, and the hills, in righteousness.
⁴ **Let him defend the needy among the people, rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.**
⁵ May he live as long as the sun and moon endure, from one generation to another.
⁶ **Let him come down like rain upon the mown field, like showers that water the earth.**
⁷ In his time may the righteous flourish; and let there be an abundance of peace

¹⁸ **Blessed are you, LORD God, the God of Israel; you alone do wondrous deeds!**

¹⁹ And blessed be your glorious name forever, and may all the earth be filled with your glory. Amen.

SECOND READING: Romans 15:4-13

Live in harmony, welcoming one another

⁴ Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors ⁹ and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, “Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles and sing praises to your name”;

¹⁰ and again he says, “Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people”;

¹¹ and again, “Praise the Lord, all you gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him”;

¹² and again Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the gentiles; in him the gentiles shall hope.” ¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION SONG: “Jesus Messiah”

WEEKLY CALENDAR of December 7, 2025

Today, December 7:	9:00 am River Practice 10:00 am River Service 11:00 am Coffee Hour
Monday, December 8:	9:00 am Stitching Group
Tuesday, December 9:	
Wednesday, December 10:	5:00 pm Knoephla Soup Cook-Off 6:15 pm Worship 7:00 pm Church School, Confirmation, River Practice, Jesus and The Women Bible Study
Thursday, December 11:	1:30 pm Book Club 6:30 pm Church Council Meeting 7:00 pm AA Meeting
Friday, December 12:	1:30 pm Wired Word Group
Saturday, December 13:	10:00 am Men’s Bible Study 3:00 Christmas Program Rehearsal
Sunday, December 7:	9:00 am River Practice 10:00 am River Service, Church School 11:00 am Cookie Walk, Coffee Hour 2:00 pm Caroling

Upcoming Events:

December 10th, 17th, at 5:15pm: December Advent Meals

December 21st at 10:00am: Children’s Christmas Program



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 Soup Cook-Off

- Competitors: Please have your knoephla 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



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

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 3:1-12

A voice cries: Prepare the way of the Lord

¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’”

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, ⁹ and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

SERMON Pastor Lisa Ahlness

SONG OF THE DAY: “Turn Your Eyes”

APOSTLES’ CREED

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

SHARING OF THE PEACE

OFFERING SONG: “Create in Me”

OFFERING PRAYER

WE SHARE THE MEAL

PREPARATION FOR THE MEAL

LORD’S PRAYER

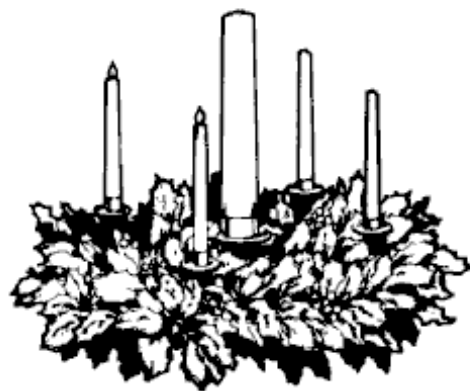
INVITATION TO OUR LORD’S SUPPER

COMMUNION SONG: “Just As I am”

COMMUNION BLESSING/POST COMMUNION PRAYER

BENEDICTION

SENDING SONG: “Great is the Lord”



“THE RIVER” and “LIVING WATER” WORSHIP MINISTERS

Pastor—Pastor Lisa Ahlness

Scripture Reader— Esther Anderson

Communion Assistants—Sheila Koffler, Mavis Pommerer, Kay Koch

Ushers—Cheryl & Steve Neu, Kathryn & Alex Spilman

Altar Guild—Jean Kraft, Valerie Kinze, Cheryl Neu, Cherie Krueger

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

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, Emmett Wolf, Peg Ahlness, Don Becker, Connie Werner, Dave Kunze, Marvin Leer, Katie Leer, Jim Kennedy, Janie Hague, Terry Grenz, George Harris

For those dealing with the death of these loved ones:

Jackie Kraft Kolpack, Keaton Westlake, John Hertzgard, Judi Fockler