

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

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Website: 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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“Making Jesus Known By Sharing Our Gifts”

The River

A Blended Worship Service



**Lutheran Church of the Cross
January 4, 2026**

“Making Jesus Known by Sharing our Gifts”

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE CROSS

January 4, 2026

Second Sunday of Christmas

We Come Together

PRELUDE: “Come All You People”, “He Came Down”

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GREETINGS OF PEACE

OUR CONFESSION, GOD’S FORGIVENESS

GATHERING SONG: “All Are Welcome”

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

We Hear God’s Word

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:7-14

⁷ Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
“Save, O LORD, your people,
the remnant of Israel.”

⁸ See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame,
those with child and those in labor together;
a great company, they shall return here.

⁹ With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations I will lead them back;
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path where they shall not stumble,

Prayers

For those struggling with health and other concerns:

Tracy Martinson, Earl Larson, Nancy Dockter, Hattie Martinson, Josey Hanson, Heidi Renner, JoDee Sayler, Diane Klein, Libby Martin, Kira Willadsen, Kerry Carpenter, Sher Harildstad, Shirley Holder, Jerry Hanson, Joyce Wahl, Jeff Christianson, Arvid Mugaas, Pete Barrette, Heather Martin, Daryl Hodnefield, Lorna Mathais, Jagger Lindsey, Emmett Wolf, Don Becker, Connie Werner, Dave Kunze, Marvin Leer, Katie Leer, Jim Kennedy, Janie Hague, George Harris, Ken Will

For those dealing with the death of these loved ones:

Peg Ahlness, Terry Grenz, Lori Marx, Jackie Kraft Kolpack, Keaton Westlake

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.

Led by Marjo Hewitson followed by her fearless readers.

January —”All the Colors of the Dark” by Chris Whitaker

February—”The Briar Club” by Kate Quinn

Jesus & Women Bible Study: 1/7, 1/14 at 7:00 in Youth Room

Thank you to all the cookie bakers, who donated their time and delicious cookies for LCC’s annual Cookie Walk on December 14th, 2025! ☐☐ Art proudly delivered a check of \$845. to Heaven’s Helpers to help in feeding the community! Plus 8 carolers delivered cookies and songs to 11 of LCC’s shut ins!

Thanks to all the helpers setting up and on sale day!

You helped cheer my day, plus seeing the smiles on the recipients of baked goods! Sally Grenz

The **Annual Meeting** is scheduled for Sunday, January 25 following the service

You may take your **poinsettias** after today’s church service. Thank you for purchasing them. The white plastic bags are out in the narthex for you to use.

WE SHARE THE MEAL

PREPARATION FOR THE MEAL

LORD’S PRAYER (Sung)

INVITATION TO OUR LORD’S SUPPER

COMMUNION SONG “Let us Break Bread Together”, “Precious Lord, Take My Hand”

COMMUNION BLESSING/POST COMMUNION PRAYER

BENEDICTION

SENDING SONG: “Lord, I Lift Your Name on High”

“THE RIVER” and “LIVING WATER” WORSHIP MINISTERS

- Pastor**—Pastor Lisa Ahlness
- Scripture Reader**—Tracy Wolf
- Communion Assistants**—Roger & Esther Anderson, Kay Koch
- Ushers**—Janice Martin, Joel and Suzanne Toso
- Altar Guild**— Cherie Krueger, Ruth Jensen
- Faith and Care Group 3** —Melissa & Jay Volk, MaryLee Gregware & Daniel McKinney
- 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

for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

- ¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him
and will keep him as a shepherd does a flock.”
- ¹¹ For the LORD has ransomed Jacob
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.
- ¹² They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and over the young of the flock and the herd;
their life shall become like a watered garden,
and they shall never languish again.
- ¹³ Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,
and the young men and the old shall be merry.
I will turn their mourning into joy;
I will comfort them and give them gladness for sorrow.
- ¹⁴ I will give the priests their fill of fatness,
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,

says the LORD.

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 147:12-20

- ¹² Extol the LORD, O Jerusalem!
Praise your God, O Zion!
- ¹³ **For he strengthens the bars of your gates;
he blesses your children within you.**
- ¹⁴ He grants peace within your borders;
he fills you with the finest of wheat.
- ¹⁵ **He sends out his command to the earth;
his word runs swiftly.**
- ¹⁶ He gives snow like wool;
he scatters frost like ashes.
- ¹⁷ **He hurls down hail like crumbs—
who can stand before his cold?**

¹⁸ He sends out his word and melts them;
he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow.
¹⁹ **He declares his word to Jacob,
his statutes and ordinances to Israel.**
²⁰ He has not dealt thus with any other nation;
they do not know his ordinances.
Praise the LORD!

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14
The will of God made known in Christ

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵ He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹ he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹² so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴ this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

GOSPEL SONG: “Jesus Messiah”

Gospel: John 1: (1-9) 10-18
God with us: the incarnation of the Word

[¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word

was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John testified to him and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’”) ¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

SERMON: Pastor Sondra Krogstad

SONG OF THE DAY: “Love Divine, All Love Excelling”

APOSTLES’ CREED

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

SHARING OF THE PEACE

OFFERING SONG: “Let All Things Now Living”

OFFERING PRAYER