

**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
September 13, 2026**

“Making Jesus Known by Sharing our Gifts”

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE CROSS

September 13, 2026

Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost

Introduction In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.

We Come Together

PRELUDE: "Jesus Name Above All Names", 10,000 Reasons"

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Farwell and Godspeed to Gary and Judy Heaton

GREETINGS OF PEACE

OUR CONFESSION, GOD'S FORGIVENESS

GATHERING SONG: "Gather Us In"

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

We Hear God's Word

FIRST READING: Genesis 50:15-21

Joseph reconciles with his brothers

¹⁵ Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" ¹⁶ So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷ 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

A memorial service of remembrance for Jackie Kraft Kolpack will be held tomorrow, September 14, at 2 pm in the Multipurpose Room to the left of the kitchen. Jackie, daughter of John and Jean Kraft, died last November in Utah. Her ashes were scattered this weekend by family at a spot beloved by Jackie. You are welcome to come support Jean and John and remember Jackie with stories and prayers and fellowship. A light lunch will be served.

Calling all youth grades 6-12! There will be a Mock-In this Friday evening from 6-10 pm at Peace Lutheran Church in Lincoln. Come hang out for food and fun with youth from the Bis-Man area. See the insert or poster for QR code to register (helps with food count - but you can impulsively decide to come, too!).

We are celebrating our "miracle baby," Emmet Wolf, with a first birthday party/ baby shower (that he never got to have) here at church on September 27th after worship. Kyle and Marisa have an Amazon registry under their names, but if that is not in your wheelhouse, provided the following list as well: (12 month or larger sizes) pants, double zipper sleepers, baby proofing items, outdoor toys that will grow with him, warm snow suit, silicone suction cup bowls, wagon, Pampers diapers (size 2-3), Nuk 5 oz sippy cups, baby swing for swing set, baby foods (he likes mixed options), baby teething foods, foam climbing blocks, chunky wood puzzles, busy board, different size balls, board books, Johnson and Johnson baby wash, Pampers sensitive wipes, Aquafor, Tubby Todd All Over Ointment.

We bid farewell today to long time members Pastor Gary and Judy Heaton. They are moving to Iowa shortly, and we will miss them! Pastor Gary has been an important part of many ministries in our area, and when they became members here, led the men's Bible study and would give Pastor Donna the gift of preaching once a month to give her a break. His gift of humor has lightened many moments for us. Judy and Pastor Gary, best wishes to you!

No doubt you have noticed some changes in decor in our narthex! A "common space refresh" committee of Molly Traynor, Deb Sargent, Kari Harris, and Tracy Geiermann took on this project with input from many of you and the council. Special thanks to Paul Gurholt and John Kraft for their help. Beautifully done, everyone! You will hear a little more about the process in the next newsletter and a temple talk, too.

September 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Kids Corner 9-10:30	2 Faith & Care 5:15pm	3	4 Wired Word 1:30	5 Men's Bible Study 10 am
6 9a R. Practice 10am River Service 11am Coffee	7 Labor Day Office closed	8 Kids Corner 9-10:30	9 Book Club 1:30	10 Church Council 6:30pm	11 Wired Word 1:30	12 Men's Bible Study 10 am
13 Rally Day Potluck 9a R. Practice 10am River Service Blessing of the	14 Stitching 9am Memorial	15 Kids Corner 9-10:30	16 5pm Rally Day Potluck Blessing of the Backpacks	17 Gather Bible Study 10:30	18 Wired Word 1:30	19 Men's Bible Study 10 am
20 9a R. Practice 10am River Service 11am Coffee	21 Stitching 9am	22 Kids Corner 9-10:30	23 Meal 5 pm Church Service 6:15	24 Quilting begins for the school year 1pm	25 Wired Word 1:30	26 Men's Bible Study 10am
27 9a R. Practice 10am River Service 11am Coffee Emmett birthday	28 Stitching 9am	29 Kids Corner 9-10:30	30 5pm Meal			

¹⁸ Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, “We are here as your slaves.” ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹ So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.” In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 103: (1-7) 8-13

Lord, you are full of compassion and mercy. (Ps. 103:8)

- ¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.
- ² **Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and do not forget all his benefits—**
- ³ who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
- ⁴ **who redeems your life from the Pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,**
- ⁵ who satisfies you with good as long as you live
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.
- ⁶ **The LORD works vindication
and justice for all who are oppressed.**
- ⁷ He made known his ways to Moses,
his acts to the people of Israel.
- ⁸ **The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**
- ⁹ He will not always accuse,
nor will he keep his anger forever.
- ¹⁰ **He does not deal with us according to our sins
nor repay us according to our iniquities.**
- ¹¹ For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

- ¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far he removes our transgressions from us.
- ¹³ As a father has compassion for his children,
so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him.

SECOND READING: Romans 14:1-12

Accepting diversity in the community of faith

¹ Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³ Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat, for God has welcomed them. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on slaves of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵ Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶ Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord. Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who abstain, abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷ For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸ If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

¹² So then, each one of us will be held accountable.



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. Anyone is welcome to attend. Led by Marjo Hewitson followed by her fearless readers.

October— The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell by Robert Dugoni

November—The Book Club for Troublesome Women by Marie Bostwick

December— A Happier Life by Kristy Harvey

January—The Things We Never Say by Elizabeth Strout

Financial Peace University

Take control of your money with Financial Peace University! This nine-week class uses biblical wisdom and common-sense strategies to help you budget, pay off debt, and build wealth for your future.

- Start Date:** October 4 at 5:30 PM

- Cost:** \$80 per family (*Scholarships available for completing all 9 weeks!*)

- Childcare:** Free childcare provided

Sign up at the Volunteer Table in the entryway or speak with Eve Kath for more details. Open to members and non-members.

If you are interested in joining Lutheran Church of the Cross, or hearing more about it, or know someone who is - please let Pastor Lisa know and be sure she or the office has your contact info. **New Member class** will be held after worship on September 27, and we will welcome new members on Sunday, October 4th. If this doesn't work with your schedule, please speak to Pastor.

September Altar Focus: Birthday Care Kits

This month's altar focus we will put together birthday kits for families with foster kids. These items are being collected by the organization Foster Hope. Please bring the below listed items (we will assemble kits and deliver to Foster Hope), or put together a whole kit. Let's help make some birthdays happy! Thanks for your help! These are the items needed: Disposable cake pans, Cake mixes, Birthday candles, Balloons, Birthday cards, Sprite (used in place of oil), Frosting, Sprinkles

GOSPEL SONG: "Gospel Acclamation"

GOSPEL: Matthew 18: 21-35

A parable of forgiveness in the community of faith

²¹ Peter came and said to [Jesus,] "Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³ "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

SERMON: Pastor Lisa Ahlness

SONG OF THE DAY: “All Creatures of Our God and King”

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

SHARING OF THE PEACE

OFFERING SONG: “Give Thanks”

OFFERING PRAYER

WE SHARE THE MEAL

PREPARATION FOR THE MEAL

LORD’S PRAYER

INVITATION TO OUR LORD’S SUPPER

COMMUNION SONG: “In the Garden”

COMMUNION BLESSING/POST COMMUNION PRAYER

BENEDICTION

SENDING SONG: “Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ”

Table Grace: “Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow”

“THE RIVER” and “LIVING WATER” WORSHIP MINISTERS

Pastor—Pastor Lisa Ahlness

Scripture Reader—Deb Patterson

Communion Assistants—Roger & Esther Anderson, Sheila Koffler

Ushers—Janice Martin, Kinsey & Rich Fockler

Altar Guild— Jean Kraft, Mavis Pommerer, Cheryl Neu

Faith and Care Group 1—Janet & Troy Bassingthwaite, Annie & Aanen Bergrud

River Worship Team—

Sound Board Technicians— Larry Wolf, Karen Will

Projection Team— 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, Glen Hyland, Doug Johnson, Cherie Krueger, AJ Marx, Kathy Morrison, Mark Murie, Deb Patterson, Amanda Sagsveen

Percussionist— Kari Harris

Violinist—Fynn Sagsveen

Accompanists—Gerri Sarsten, Eve Kath, Noura Eldredge

Sunday Worship Coordinator—Peder Gulleson

Living Water Worship Team

Living Water Singers—Bria Blanchard, Caroline Collins, Keira Collins, Joel Crane, Annabelle Ellison, Brandi Ellison, Amanda Sagsveen

Percussionist—Kari Harris

Guitarists— Joel Crane, Peder Gulleson

Accompanist —

Sound—Peder Gulleson

Wednesday Worship Coordinator—Joel Crane

Prayers

For those struggling with health and other concerns:

Earl Larson, Nancy Dockter, Heidi Renner, Diane Klein, Libby Martin, Kira Willadsen, Sher Harildstad, Shirley Holder, Joyce Wahl, Jeff Christianson, Heather Martin, Daryl Hodnefield, Jagger Lindsey, Emmett Wolf, Don Becker, Dave Kunze, Marvin Leer, Ken Will, Laurie Stenehjerm, Breezy Uffelman, Jim Moore, Mark Doerner, Mike Doerner, Sandy Hyland, Liam Keller, Dezaray Hultin Kitzman, Chuck Rydell, Lee Jensen, Jordan Sargent, Karen Will, Rich Fockler, Pat Schmidt

For those dealing with the death of these loved ones: