

**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

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The River

A Blended Worship Service



**Lutheran Church of the Cross
September 20, 2026**

“Making Jesus Known by Sharing our Gifts”

“Making Jesus Known By Sharing Our Gifts”

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE CROSS

September 20, 2026

Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost

Introduction

Matthew narrates one of Jesus' controversial parables in which Jesus says that the reign of God is like that of a landowner who pays his workers the same wage no matter what time of day they began to work. When God changes God's mind about punishing Nineveh for their evil ways, Jonah is angry. Yet God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love. In baptism we receive the grace of God that is freely given to all. As Martin Luther wrote, in the presence of God's mercy we are all beggars.

We Come Together

PRELUDE: "Lord of Light", "Come as You Are"

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GREETINGS OF PEACE

OUR CONFESSION, GOD'S FORGIVENESS

GATHERING SONG: "Take My Life That I May Be"

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

We Hear God's Word

FIRST READING: Jonah 3:10-4:11

God's concern for the city of Nineveh

¹⁰ When God saw what [the people of Nineveh] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not do it.

The two mum plants in the sanctuary were given by David & Kathy Drovda in honor of Jackie: John & Jean Kraft's daughter for her memorial.

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.

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.

The **Missouri Slope Areawide United Way** sponsors the **BackPack Program**. We are now a collection site for that program. Let's fill to the brim the tote and may it even be overflowing with food items for the backpack program. The tote will be here until October 5. Over 1700 children throughout Bismarck, Mandan and the Lincoln communities are served weekly.

LCC has and continues to be active in finding ways to support our community and global projects. The repurposed cabinet contains baskets for collecting altar focus items which will rotate monthly. The drawers contain special collections for community programs such as stamps and pop tops. There will be signage and an explanation of the current altar focus on top of the cabinet. The food pantry bins will stay in place. Please make note of labels on the baskets as they will change with each altar focus. THANK YOU for your GENEROSITY!

September 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Kids Corner 9-10:30	2 Faith & Care 5:15pm	3	4 Wired Word	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 back-	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 Word	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 Service 7 School, Confrimaton	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 /Class Emmett birthday	28 Stitching 9am	29 Kids Corner 9-10:30	30 Meal 5 pm Church Service 6:15 Service 7 School, Confrimaton			

^{4:1} But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. ² He prayed to the Lord and said, “O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning, for I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from punishment. ³ And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” ⁴ And the Lord said, “Is it right for you to be angry?” ⁵ Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

⁶ The Lord God appointed a bush and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort, so Jonah was very happy about the bush. ⁷ But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. ⁸ When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, “It is better for me to die than to live.”

⁹ But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?” And he said, “Yes, angry enough to die.” ¹⁰ Then the Lord said, “You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹ And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left and also many animals?”

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 145:1-8

The *Lord* is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (Ps. 145:8)

- ¹ I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.
- ² **Every day I will bless you
and praise your name forever and ever.**
- ³ Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised;
his greatness is unsearchable.
- ⁴ **One generation shall extol your works to another
and shall declare your mighty acts.**

- ⁵ They will recount the glorious splendor of your majesty,
and on your wondrous works I will meditate.
- ⁶ **They will proclaim the might of your awesome deeds,
and I will declare your greatness.**
- ⁷ They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.
- ⁸ **The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

SECOND READING: Philippians 1:21-30

Standing firm in the gospel

²¹ For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet I cannot say which I will choose. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, ²⁴ but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵ Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶ so that, by my presence again with you, your boast might abound in Christ Jesus because of me.

²⁷ Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ and in no way frightened by those opposing you. For them, this is evidence of their destruction but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹ For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ but of suffering for him as well, ³⁰ since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.



WND Women of the ELCA

Mar 15 · 



Save the Dates

TOG 23-24
Women's Retreat 2026

Join us for our **Combined Western ND Women of the ELCA
Convention & Women's Retreat** at CCM this fall!

You can come to the day of only programming on *Oct 24th* for
\$60.

Or you can come on *Friday evening on Oct 23rd* for some
additional activities for \$100 (lodging and meals included).

Women of the **ELCA** 

CAMP
of the  CROSS
Ministries

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 20:1-16

The parable of the vineyard workers

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹ "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-place, ⁴ and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' ⁷ They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' ⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' ⁹ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' ¹³ But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

SERMON: Pastor Lisa Ahlness

SONG OF THE DAY: “Here I Am Lord”

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

SHARING OF THE PEACE

OFFERING SONG: “Amazing Grace How Sweet the Sound”

OFFERING PRAYER

WE SHARE THE MEAL

PREPARATION FOR THE MEAL

LORD’S PRAYER

INVITATION TO OUR LORD’S SUPPER

COMMUNION SONG: “Reckless Love”, “How Great is Our God”

COMMUNION BLESSING/POST COMMUNION PRAYER

BENEDICTION

SENDING SONG: “For Such A Time As This”

“THE RIVER” and “LIVING WATER” WORSHIP MINISTERS

Pastor—Pastor Lisa Ahlness

Scripture Reader—Cherie Krueger

Communion Assistants—Kay Koch, Sheila Koffler, HELP

Ushers—Suzanne & Joel Toso, Larry Jahner

Altar Guild— Jean Kraft, Mavis Pommerer, Cheryl Neu

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

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 Stenehjem, Breezy Uffelman, Jim Moore, Mark Doerner, Mike Doerner, Sandy Hyland, Liam Keller, Dezaray Hultin Kitzman, Chuck Rydell, Lee Jensen, Jordan Sargent, Karen Will, Pat Schmidt

For those dealing with the death of these loved ones: