

**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:

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Cell: 220.9011 / lisaahlness@hotmail.com

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The River

A Blended Worship Service



**Lutheran Church of the Cross
September 27, 2026**

“Making Jesus Known by Sharing our Gifts”

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LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE CROSS

September 27, 2026

Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost

Introduction

Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy world.

We Come Together

PRELUDE: "Welcome Table", "Turn Your Eyes"

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GREETINGS OF PEACE

OUR CONFESSION, GOD'S FORGIVENESS

GATHERING SONG: "Come Now is the Time to Worship"

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

We Hear God's Word

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 18: 1-4, 25-32

The fairness of God's way

¹ The word of the Lord came to me: ² What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? ³ As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴ Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins who shall die.

We are celebrating our "**miracle baby,**" **Emmet Wolf**, with a first birthday party/baby shower (that he never got to have) here at church TODAY 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.

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.

Thank you for the best wishes and cards received recently when I celebrated another birthday. It was a great weekend. I am humbled and blessed. Thank you again.
Art Wheeler

Brian Krause, Director of Pastoral Care at Missouri Slope Care Center is in need of **volunteers on Sundays** for about 2 hrs each time. The residents are in need of assistance arriving on time for the chapel service. You would need to be there around 12:30 to go and bring to the chapel area the residents. Peder sings prior to the worship service. The residents enjoy listening to him before to the worship which is a 1:15. Service is about a half an hour. Then the residents need to be taken back to their rooms or wherever they need to go about 2 ish. You may contact Brian at his email address: brian.krause@mslcc.com or call him at 701.221.9361

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	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, Confrim- ation	24 Quilting be- gins 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	28 Stitching 9am	29 Kids Corner 9-10:30	30 Meal 5 pm Church Service 6:15 Service 7 School, Confrim-			

²⁵ Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶ When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed, they shall die. ²⁷ Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸ Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹ Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

³⁰ Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹ Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 25:1-9

Remember, O *Lord*, your compassion and love. (Ps. 25:6)

¹ To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

² **O my God, in you I trust;
do not let me be put to shame;
do not let my enemies exult over me.**

³ Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

⁴ **Make me to know your ways, O Lord;
teach me your paths.**

⁵ Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.

⁶ **Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.**

⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for the sake of your goodness, O Lord!

⁸ **Good and upright is the Lord;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.**

⁹ He leads the humble in what is right
and teaches the humble his way.

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:1-13

Christ humbled to the point of death on a cross

¹ If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶ who, though he existed in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be grasped,

⁷ but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
assuming human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a human,

⁸ he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God exalted him even more highly
and gave him the name
that is above every other name,

¹⁰ so that at the name given to Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,



WND Women of the ELCA

Mar 15 • 

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Save the Dates



10 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

¹¹ and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

¹² Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

GOSPEL SONG: "Gospel Alleluia"

GOSPEL: Matthew 21:23-32

A parable of doing God's will

²³ When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" ²⁴ Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why, then, did you not believe him?' ²⁶ But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet." ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸ "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' ²⁹ He answered, 'I will not,' but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him."

SERMON: Pastor Lisa Ahlness

SONG OF THE DAY: “Lord, I Lift Your Name on High”

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

SHARING OF THE PEACE

OFFERING SONG: “Create in Me a Clean Heart”

OFFERING PRAYER

WE SHARE THE MEAL

PREPARATION FOR THE MEAL

LORD’S PRAYER Sung

INVITATION TO OUR LORD’S SUPPER

COMMUNION SONG: “Take Oh Take Me as I Am”, “How Great is Our God”

COMMUNION BLESSING/POST COMMUNION PRAYER

BENEDICTION

SENDING SONG: “I Love to Tell the Story”

“THE RIVER” and “LIVING WATER” WORSHIP MINISTERS

Pastor—Pastor Lisa Ahlness

Scripture Reader—Kathy Morrison

Communion Assistants—Deb Sargent, Verlaine Jahner, Doug Johnson

Ushers—David & Kathy Drovdal, HELP

Altar Guild— Verlaine Jahner, Ruth Jensen, Kelly Olson

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 Stenehjerm, 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, Lynn Bigwood

For those dealing with the death of these loved ones: