

Cross Currents

Lutheran
Church
of the Cross
2024

January



Dear LCC friends -

A very happy and blessed New Year to you! At the beginning of a new year, I find myself filling in my calendar with dates with anticipation. I'm old-fashioned, I guess. I still use a paper calendar. As I start to fill in the pages with upcoming events, meetings and gatherings in the year ahead, I give thanks for the new opportunities and adventures that await. Perhaps you have an upcoming family reunion or anticipate the birth of a baby in 2024; maybe you will be starting a new job or you may be transitioning into retirement. For some, it might simply be the opportunity to turn the calendar from 2023 to 2024 and wonder what the new year will bring!

In addition to our Bible Studies, Men's Breakfast, Women of the Cross, choir practices, youth activities, small groups, soup kitchens, church happenings and volunteer opportunities, I would like to tell you of two new things that we are beginning in January.

StoneHouse Friday "Lord's Prayer" Study on Fridays from January 12-Feb 16. We will meet from 12:00 Noon -1:15 PM in the StoneHouse conference room at the RiverWood Bank in Baxter, next to Target. The book is titled The Lord's Prayer by Adam Hamilton. It is an engaging book centered around the prayer that our Lord Jesus has taught us to pray. I hope you can join us for a great discussion and wonderful learning opportunity in a very laid back atmosphere. This is open to men and women.

Beth Moore James Bible Study on Mondays from 9:30-11:30 AM. This 8-week study on the Book of James will go from January 22-March 18, with no class on Feb.19, President's Day. It is an interactive study with a workbook. This class is for women of all ages and will meet in the old youth room and will be led by Marilyn Quist. Talk to Marilyn or Pastor Michelle about getting a James workbook so you are ready to begin on January 22. This is a fantastic opportunity to delve into the Book of James. Hope to see you there.

As you begin a new year, I encourage you to follow the example of the psalmist and remember God's loving kindness every morning and His faithfulness each night. With these two cornerstones, every day will be bathed in the light of God's loving care for you.

Prayerfully yours,
Pastor Michelle

It is good to sing of your unfailing love in the morning and proclaim your faithfulness at night.
Psalm 92:2

Dear Friends,

Last year our council put together a task force to bring our church constitution and bylaws up to date. We have been working on a constitution from back when the ELCA was formed. During COVID, we realized that our constitution was woefully outdated and needed to be updated. For the past year, our task force has been working on the constitution and bylaws which have been approved by the synod. We now can bring them forth to the congregation to be voted on at our Congregational meeting January 21st. As you review the constitution and bylaws, note the proposed changes are in red, and the required content is in black and cannot be changed as per synod requirements. Copies are available in the church office and were emailed to the voting congregation on December 26th.

Along with the 2024 proposed budget discussion, our task force will present the proposed changes Sunday, January 14th between worship services and answer any questions you may have regarding the constitution and bylaws.

Thank you,
Pastor Drew



LCC Budget Discussion will be held January 14th at 10:00 am in the Celebration Center.

Annual Meeting Part 2 will be held January 21st at 10:00 am in the Celebration Center.

**Annual
Congregational
Meeting**

New Years Blessing

May your year be filled with peace, prosperity, and love.
May God's blessings shower upon you and bestow upon each of you a bright, healthy, and peaceful new year.

— From your staff at LCC

HAPPY NEW YEAR
2024

Treasurer's Report - Financial Summary 2023 General Fund

	<u>November</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>Budget</u>	Annual Annual <u>Budget</u>
Income	\$ 54,562	\$ 625,535	\$ 699,490	89.4%
Expenses	\$ 58,753	\$ 644,787	\$ 699,490	92.9%
Difference	(\$ 4,191)	(\$ 19,253)	\$ 0	

**In the month of November our income was less than our expenses by (\$4,191).
Thank you for your continued support.**



BAPTISM

Name: Hudson Lee Nokken
 Born: April 28, 2023
 Baptized: December 17, 2023
 Parents: Sean & Kelly Nokken
 Pastor Drew Bakken, Officiant

FUNERAL

Name: John Poston
 Born: May 5, 1958
 Died in Christ: December 5, 2023
 Funeral: December 16, 2023
 Lutheran Church of the Cross
 Pastor Drew Bakken, Officiant



Annual reports due: Please submit your 2023 annual committee reports via email to Laurie by January 5th, 2024 at laurie@lccnisswa.org.

LCC 2024 Offering Envelopes are available to pick up in the Narthex. Those who give electronically or only a few times a year do not have offering envelopes. Any questions, please contact Karen Wiele, Financial Secretary at 218-961-2016.





EPIPHANY—HOLY GRAFFITI!

24 + C + M + B + 24

If you're not familiar with this holy day, Epiphany takes place on January 6. It provides the occasion to celebrate the revelation of God to all peoples in Jesus of Nazareth.

Epiphany (also known as Twelfth Night, *Theophany*, or Three Kings Day) marks the occasion of a time-honored Christian tradition of “chalking the doors.” The formula for the ritual — adapted for 2020 — is simple: take chalk of any color and write the following above the entrance of your home:

24 + C + M + B + 24

The letters have two meanings. First, they represent the initials of the Magi — Caspar, Malchior, and Balthazar — who came to visit Jesus in His first home. They also abbreviate the Latin phrase, *Christus mansionem benedicat*: “May Christ bless this dwelling.” The “+” signs represent the cross, and the “24” at the beginning and the “24” at the end mark the year. Taken together, this inscription is performed as a request for Christ to bless those homes so marked and that He stay with those who dwell therein throughout the entire year.

The chalking of the doors is a centuries-old practice throughout the world, though it appears to be somewhat less well-known in the United States. It is, however, an easy tradition to adopt, and a great practice whereby we dedicate our year to God from its very outset, asking His blessing on our homes and on all who live, work, or visit them there.

When we “Chalk the Door,” we mark our front or main entrance doors with chalk as a sign that we are inviting God’s presence into the places, relationships, and situations that we call home. Chalking the door is a tangible way to honor God in our lives.

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9: *Listen, people of Israel! The LORD is our God. The LORD is the only God. You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. Always remember these commands that I give you today. Be sure to teach them to your children. Talk about these commands when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road. Talk about them when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them on your hands and wear them on your foreheads to help you remember my teachings. Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.*

Practicing traditions like the chalking of the doors helps us to live our Faith more concretely and serve as an outward sign of our dedication to Our Lord. Our homes are also the place where many of us will make the greatest strides in our spiritual growth,

through observance of daily prayer, spiritual reading, and work offered as an oblation to God.

The chalking of the doors of a home encourages Christians to dedicate their life at home to God and to others. Seeing the symbols over our doors can help to remind us, while passing in and out on our daily routines, that our homes and all those who dwell there belong to Christ. It also serves as a reminder of welcoming the Magi gave to Jesus. We should strive to be as welcoming to all who come to our homes to visit us!

How to Do Chalking the Doors

1. **Mark your calendar** – Epiphany is on January 6, 12 days after Christmas.
2. **Find some chalk** – Any color will do! Sidewalk chalk is a particularly sturdy option.
3. **Gather everyone together** – Everyone should be involved. If you're blessing your home, gather your whole household.
4. **Pray** – God of heaven and earth, you revealed your only-begotten One to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this home and all who inhabit it. Fill us with the light of Christ, that our concern for others may reflect your love. We ask this through Christ our Savior. Amen.

All may take turns chalking the door: 24+ C + M + B + 24

5. **Pray**—The three Wise Men, Caspar [C], Melchior [M], and Balthasar [B], followed the star to Bethlehem and the child Jesus 2000 [20] and 24 [24] years ago. May Christ bless our home, and remain with us throughout the new year. Amen.

All say the Lord's Prayer

<https://onepeterfive.com/the-chalking-of-the-doors-an-epiphany-tradition-explained/> ; <https://buildfaith.org/chalking-the-door/>

Jan. 7	Dagne Neale & Aliana Lind	Emily Smith & Nora Nelson
Jan. 14	Gavin & Ethan Troisdahl	Lauren Scott & Anthony Nelson
Jan. 21	Gavin Johnson & Tucker Williams	Rebecca Bakken & Emersyn Sullivan
Jan. 28	Presleigh Larson & Violet Anderson	Jude Anderson & Emily Smith



**ACOLYTES
FOR
JANUARY**

Salt & Light by Kari Erickson

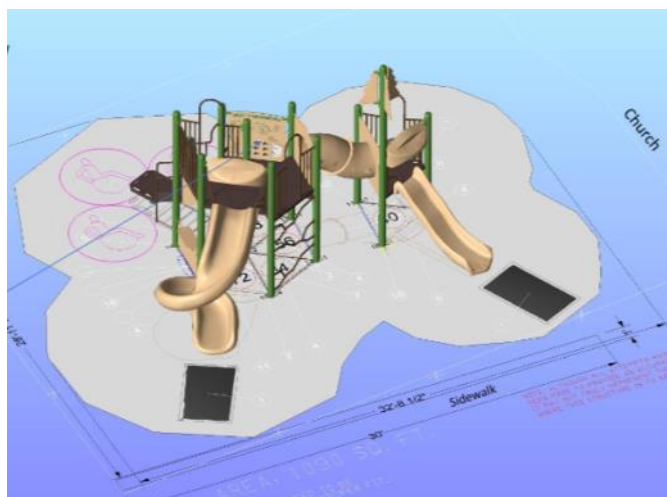


2024 will arrive soon, and New Year's Day gives us a chance to celebrate the old year and look ahead to the new one. And a new year provides an opportunity for us all to make a difference. For our children and youth, it means we need to encourage them and pray for them to get through any barriers they run into and help them work toward becoming the person Christ wants them to be. We need to help them see what amazing things God has in store for them in the coming year.

In today's world, kids/teens sometimes run from one thing to another in a quest to keep up with their peers. As mentors, parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents, it is our role to help them to remember that they are created for good works despite what may be going on around them. When Paul spoke to the Ephesians, he reminded them of how they should live (see Ephesians 4:17-24.) You see, we have to keep in mind – everyday – how God plays a role in each moment for us as Christians. Sometimes that means 'putting on a new self' (see Ephesians 4:22-25.) Maybe a good habit for 2024 would be to recite Psalm 51:10 each morning: *God, create a pure heart in me, and make my spirit strong again.* When a child/teen in your life is struggling, remind them of Psalm 51:10. Remind them over and over.

Whatever happens, always be thankful. This is how God wants you to live in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Hmmmm – don't just be thankful for the good stuff, but for all stuff. Reflecting on what we are grateful for is the key to finding things to be thankful for in any circumstance. 1 Peter 1:6-7 encourages us with these words: *I know the thought of that is exciting, even if you must suffer through different kinds of troubles for a short time now. These troubles test your faith and prove that it is pure. And such faith is worth more than gold. Gold can be proved to be pure by fire, but gold will ruin. When your faith is proven to be pure, the result will be praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ comes.* Another key message we must relay to our children and youth is that the more we celebrate God throughout our day, the more His joy will fill our hearts. And, the more we learn about Jesus, the more we become like Him. Learning about Him requires questions and discussion, along with hearing the gospel and reading it.

I'm not convinced that God is very interested in new year resolutions we can make about changing things. He wants us each to live for Him and through that life, make a difference. Will you join me in being the face of Jesus for our children and youth? Keep being there for them and live in a way that sets an example for them to follow. Encourage them when they stumble and help grow their faith. Together we can do this and WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



Playground Update

Here are the diagrams of our final proposal for our playground installation. Detailed information is available and on display in the narthex, along with a sample of the materials that are used by the Burke company. Jon Henke will be presenting an adult forum on January 7 during Coffee Fellowship to go over the plan and details from St. Croix Recreational and answer any questions you may have.

It is our hope to have work begin on this project in the late spring of 2024. Eric's Excavating will be donating the groundwork and we will assemble a team of volunteers to install the equipment under the guidance of experts from St. Croix Recreational. Funds have already been donated toward this project and we look for more donations as we proceed.

Many thanks to our Playground Task Force for their many months of work on this: Jon Henke, Pr. Drew, Todd Whipple, Kari Erickson, Dale Peterson, Maureen Schmidt, Laura Raedeke, Sherry Pape, Julie Helsene, and Danae Anderson.

Starting January 3

**FOR
YOUTH
ONLY**

Check it
out - all
9th-12th
graders
welcome!



Weds. evening
Bible Study Hangout
with Emma Trees at 7pm in
The Refuge (Classroom 3)

January's study will focus on the
Apostle's Creed



**FISHING EXTRAVAGANZA PARKING
YOUTH FUNDRAISER EVENT**



YOUTH:
plan to
volunteer
for this
event!

LCC youth & parents - sign up to
park cars at Mattson Lumber
Sat., Jan. 27 7:00am - 10:00am

<http://tinyurl.com/3bx9u2sa>





Music Notes



January 2024 Hymn of the Month

ELW 295 Of The Father's Love Begotten (DIVINUM MYSTERIUM)

1. Of the Father's love begotten ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he,
Of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore.
2. Oh, that birth forever blessed, when the virgin, full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving, bore the Savior of our race,
And the babe, the world's redeemer, first revealed his sacred face,
Evermore and evermore.
3. This is he whom seers in old time chanted of with one accord,
Whom the voices of the prophets promised in their faithful word;
Now he shines, the long expected; let creation praise its Lord
Evermore and evermore.
4. Let the heights of heaven adore him; angel hosts, his praises sing;
Powers, dominions, bow before him and extol our God and king;
Let no tongue on earth be silent, every voice in concert ring
Evermore and evermore.
5. Christ, to thee, with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to thee,
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving and unwearied praises be;
Honor, glory, and dominion, and eternal victory
Evermore and evermore!

This hymn is one of my very favorite (among many!) with its beautiful haunting, plainsong chant melody, which originated as early as the 10th century. The text matches the music perfectly telling the story of our salvation from the beginning of creation.

This is the story of how this hymn came to be, written by Robert J. Morgan in his book *Then Sings My Soul, Book 3*.

This ancient Latin hymn is by Aurelius Prudentius, who was born in northern Spain in AD 348, not long after Christianity was legalized in the Roman Empire following three centuries of persecution. Prudentius became a lawyer and provincial governor in Spain where his leadership skills attracted the attention of Emperor Theodosius I who appointed him to an imperial military post.

It may have been shortly afterward that Prudentius gave his life to Christ and began writing Christian poetry. At age fifty-seven, he retired from government and entered a monastery where he devoted himself to worship and writing. Today we have nearly four hundred poems from his hand.

Prudentius has been called “the prince of early Christian poets.” Though he and Ambrose were both writing hymns about the same time, the one by Prudentius are more reflective, displaying greater warmth and glow. Perhaps it was his warm Spanish blood.

“Of the Father’s Love Begotten” is among the greatest Christmas carols in Western history, and thankfully its popularity is on the increase, partly owing to the tender beauty of its probing score, *Divinum Mysterium*, composed nearly a thousand years ago.

Incidentally, the poetry of Prudentius was influenced by other Christian authors such as Tertullian, St. Ambrose and of course the Bible. Currently, “Of the Father’s Love Begotten” is the most well-known. We will sing this hymn throughout January as it tells our salvation story, starting with the beginning, the Alpha, then Jesus’ miraculous birth, the words of the seers and prophets, angels praising and worshipping God the Most High, and honor to the Triune God.

God’s blessings to all in this New Year!

Cathy Taylor, Director of Music Ministries



2024 PrimeTimers - A New Year of Programming

Brandon Henderson, an investigator with the Crow Wing County Sheriff’s Department will be presenting a program called Scams, Frauds, and Safety Awareness for our January program. **This is an important program for everyone!** Come find out the latest scams and frauds that are going around and how to protect yourself. Ashley

Gage, a local social worker, will also speak on adult protection. Please invite and encourage your friends and neighbors to attend this vital program. Bring a sack lunch for yourself at **12:00 Noon on Thursday, January 11**. Dessert, coffee, and lemonade provided. Program begins at 12:20 PM. Thank you to Carol and Mike Smith and Sherrie and Bruce Kunkel for lining up this program.

PrimeTimers is an over 50 group that gathers for lunch and a program once a month on the second Thursday of the month in the Chapel Hall. A variety of different programs is provided throughout the year. The group is open to the public. Everyone is invited and encouraged to participate.



WOMEN in the WORD Bible Study

Come for our January women's Bible Study on Tuesday morning, January 9, at 10:00 AM and 7:00 PM. This is open to all women and their friends. We take this time to look deeper into God's Word, enjoy some coffee and tasty treats, and gather for a time of fellowship with our fellow sisters-in-Christ. We meet in the Chapel Hall. Led by Pastor Michelle.

Men's Breakfast

Come join the guys for breakfast and a short Bible Study on Thursday mornings at Side Track restaurant on #371 every **Thursday at 8:15 AM**. All men are welcome. Come when you can.

A Time For Us Wednesday night Parent Group

This is a time for parents to gather from 7:00-8:00 PM on Wednesday evenings while your child is in Confirmation or Route 56. In January we will be continuing our book study on Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles that Can Radically Change Your Family by Paul David Tripp. Join us in the old youth room at the end of the hall on Jan. 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31. Led by Pastor Michelle

Grub 'n Games

Do you like to play games and not have to cook supper? Grub 'n Games is for you! Join us on **Friday, January 19, from 5:30-7:30** for a delicious, yet easy supper cooked and provided for you and an evening of laughs and good competitive fun! We play cards and board games. Play Nine, a card game, is the latest favorite that always brings some laughs. If you can make it, let Darrell Paske or Todd know if you are able, OR just show up! See you on January 19!

StoneHouse Fridays

We will meet on Friday, January 5, from 12:00-1:00 pm to finish our **last discussion on the Advent devotional, Come Emmanuel**. Our Fridays in December were a wonderful time of rest and reflective pondering during the Advent Season. Thank you to everyone who participated. We had a wonderful turnout and filled the conference room!

StoneHouse Fridays - Jan. 12 - Feb. 16 - The Lord's Prayer, by Adam Hamilton

Come to StoneHouse Coffee in the Riverwood Bank next to Target on Fridays from 12:00-1:00 PM January 12-February 16. We meet in the conference room near the front entrance. We will be reading and discussing the book, The Lord's Prayer, by Adam Hamilton, an engaging and thoughtful book that looks at the prayer our Lord Jesus has taught us to pray. It comes highly recommended by some of our small groups that have recently read it. If you have not read it, please join us. You may order the book online, or let us know and we can order it for you. There is also a copy in our church library. Discussion facilitated by Carol Smith, Ann Lanz, and Pastor Michelle.



Gather Bible Study—January 24, 2024 @ 10:00 a.m. in Chapel Hall

Please join us on Wednesday, January 24, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. for session 1 of the four-part Winter/Spring 2024 series: *“Scripture and nature: Teachers of faith”* by the Rev. Sara Olson-Smith. Rev. Olson-Smith notes

that, “Jesus regularly invokes nature in his teaching, drawing us into deeper relationship with the created world. But it’s not just Jesus inviting us to see creation as teacher and kin. The scriptures themselves help us see the important role of the created world in God’s story and saving work. This four-session Bible study explores how biblical stories of the natural world help us to grow our love for and commitment to God, other people and our beloved earth.” In session 1, *“Weather: Powerful force for change,”* we hear that we can’t control the weather, but we can learn from it. Storms, rain, drought and wind shape the lives of human and non-human beings, both in scripture and today. As we face catastrophic storms and the weird weather of climate change, biblical stories of extraordinary weather convict and humble us. They show us how to live faithfully, moving us to act even when we feel powerless. Candy Barnack will be leading our study and Betty Arveson will be providing treats.

DONATIONS NEEDED—Local School Personal Care Supplies

With school back in session in the area comes a great need for **travel-size** (NOT HOTEL SIZE) personal care items: shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, deodorant, and soap as well as **full-size** toothbrushes and feminine regular size pads (not tampons). Please bring to our Gather Bible Studies, or leave in the church office.



Christmas Tree of Sharing says THANKS

You, the people of LCC, have responded so generously to the needs in our community. Thank you so much. When the ornaments were placed on the tree we wondered if all the wishes would be fulfilled. The answer is a resounding yes and then more. Thirty two fathers from Adult and Teen Challenge were able to purchase gifts for their children when you gave them the opportunity to use the gift cards from Target or Walmart. Thirty elderly residents of Hills Crossing in Nisswa were blessed with your generosity when Santa came. Nine children in the Nisswa Elementary school that receive help from the Collaborative Services were so excited to get presents...“You made their day”. The Relationship Safety Alliance (Women’s shelter) in Brainerd received over 32 gifts for women and children (Our van was full of bags of gifts that made their life a little bit brighter.) Then there were 5 residents of the Breath of Life Adult Day Center that had their wishes met. And lastly there were gifts cards and handmade quilts given to a family that lost their home in a fire. That is well over 100 people and their families that experienced the love of Christ through you. They don’t know you by name but they know you care. Thank you.



YOU'RE INVITED TO BIRTHDAY SUNDAY!!!

When: Sunday January 28, 2024

Where: Celebration Center

Time: After the 9:00 a.m. Church Service

Hosts: Women of the Cross/Women of the ELCA

Come, sit, and have good conversation with other people born in your birth month. Learn fun facts about your special month.

How it Works:

1. Grab your coffee and treat as you normally do
2. Head to the table marked with you birth month
3. Have some fun getting to know new people and interesting facts about your birth month

(No gifts please 😊)

Women, BE INSPIRED!

Join Marilyn Quist and Pastor Michelle on Mondays from 9:30—11:30 am for an in-depth, 8 week bible study by Beth Moore—*James: Mercy Triumphs*.

Jesus says to let our light shine and this study will help us do just that in practical ways.

Dates for the 2024 study are: 1/22, 1/29, 2/5, 2/12, (skip 2/19), 2/26, 3/4, 3/11 and 3/18. Each session includes a one hour video followed by discussion. Workbooks are \$17.00. Sign up and pay in the church office by January 12th so the books can be ordered and arrive in time for the first session. If you have any questions, please contact Marilyn via text at (614) 769-1832.

Join us on this journey to learn more about the book of James and the person himself, who many bible scholars compare to Amos, an Old Testament prophet.



Blessed with Volunteers!

Lutheran Church of the Cross is truly blessed with Volunteers! You become the hands & feet of Jesus by giving of your time & talents for the benefit of your church! Thank you for ALL you do!

Decorating Crew for their hard work and time in making the Narthex, Sanctuary and Celebration Center and Amazing space to worship this Christmas season.

Tree donations from Dave Jabas for all the birch trees in memory of Nora Jabas, and Al & Sue Schmidt for all the great Christmas trees that adorn the church. Thank you to the watering crew for keeping the trees fresh & fragrant.

Worship Assistants that volunteered for all the extra worship services for the Christmas season: ushers, greeters, acolytes, readers, communion assistants, musicians, worship coordinators, nursery help, sound technicians, parament changers and altar guild members. It simply could not have been done without you!

Pew Keepers who quietly come into the church and tidy up the pews several times a month.

Outdoor Floral Decorations created beautifully and placed at the front entrance of our church.

Library Crew for their hard work in making our LCC library warm, welcoming and festive!

My sincere thank you for all the willingness to step up and volunteer for the many serving opportunities within our church! I look forward to the New Year with its new opportunities and being a part of what make our church family great!



God's Blessings in the New Year!

Todd Whipple, Volunteer Coordinator

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>January</p>	<p>2024</p>		
<p>Worship w/ Comm. nf/Route 56/HSYG Choir/ A Time for Us</p>	<p>4</p> <p>8:15 Men's Breakfast 10:00 Toning w/ a Purpose 7:00 A.A.</p> 	<p>5 Annual Reports Due</p> <p>12:00 Stonehouse Fridays at Stonehouse in Baxter</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>WEDNESDAY</p> <p>Worship w/ Comm. nf/Route 56/HSYG Choir/ A Time for Us</p>	<p>11</p> <p>8:15 Men's Breakfast 10:00 Toning w/ a Purpose 12:00 PrimeTimers 7:00 Church Council 7:00 A.A.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>12:00 Stonehouse Fridays at Stonehouse in Baxter</p> 	<p>13</p>
<p>Worship w/ Comm. nf/Route 56/HSYG Choir/ A Time for Us</p>	<p>18</p> <p>8:15 Men's Breakfast 9:00 Toning w/ a Purpose 7:00 A.A.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>12:00 Stonehouse Fridays at Stonehouse in Baxter 5:30 Grub & Games</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>Worship w/ Comm. nf/Route 56/HSYG Choir/ A Time for Us</p>	<p>25</p> <p>8:15 Men's Breakfast 9:00 Toning w/ a Purpose 11:30 Nisswa Garden Club 7:00 A.A.</p>	<p>26</p> <p>12:00 Stonehouse Fridays at Stonehouse in Baxter</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Youth Parking for Ice Fishing Ext.</p>
<p>Worship w/ Comm. nf/Route 56/HSYG Choir/ A Time for Us</p>			<p><i>Reminder: Before planning any meeting/event/gathering at church, call the church office for availability and scheduling. Thank you.</i></p>

Happy Birthday!

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

1. John Hahn, Benjamin Jones
- 2.
3. Angie Klein, Alex Pape
4. Del Schmidt
5. Denise Aune, Rick Carlson,
Laura Hernandez, Diane Hillman,
Stewart Sawdey
- 6.
7. Gary Severson, Sue Whipple
8. Riley Henry, Lucas Pape
- 9.
10. Brendan Hiles
11. Larry Stark, Diana Verville
12. Randahl Hoghaug, Vivian Panzer,
Gretchen Wittwer
13. Jennifer Henry, Everill Holland, Lynden
Johnson, Tom Peterson, Ken Rasinski
14. Tom Paulbeck
- 15.
16. Dane Petersen, Pr. Michelle Ruen
17. Pollyanne Heins, John Taylor
18. Lloyd Foster
19. Karlyn Gordon, Elaine Haugen
20. Sandra Potthoff
21. Diane Dalzell, Justin Pape
22. Carol Carlson, Cooper Hiles, Milton
Johnson, Roger Pierson, Jim Roberts
23. Elizabeth Guderjohn, Michael Hintz,
Bill Weik
24. Gaje Germundson, Nancy Peltier
25. Jan Burns, Malerie Klabo, Marcus Klein
26. Tyler Verworn
27. Mallory Maine, Teryl Rusch, Kari Stoxen
28. Rena Bolt, Matthew Oseland,
Nicole Petersen, Dianne Wermager
29. Stacey Gorr, Hannah Oelke, Everett Robb
30. Marsha Thomson
31. Ann Lanz, Becky Melby, Janet Skogen



Did You Know?

From the “People for Racial Justice” Group

Submitted by Marty Halvorson

On Monday the 4th of December the committee “People for Racial Justice” met with Charles Blacklance who is a Native American member of our community. The meeting, chaired by Terry Frovik, was an open forum for conversation in which Charles could entertain questions in which our committee found interest. The level of intimate sharing was incredible. Charles shared that from his perspective, things may not have changed as much as people would think as concerned with minority acceptance in the community. His examples of being singled out by several citizens left me to ponder what could be done by each of us to make our community more inclusive. Charles, as the director of TRIA at the Community College, has had an impact on that community through his very presence. It seems more likely that those who don’t know him are more likely to treat him and his family harshly.

Story telling is a method of conversation that is a way of sharing important concerns. Charles helped us consider faith, inclusion and love for our fellow human beings through his story telling. One story he shared involved a faith community and how important it is for him (and all of us) to be supported by and be able to contribute to that community. We at Lutheran Church of the Cross know how important that is. I felt challenged to make sure that those who are new members or visitors experience a welcoming community.



Prayer Shawl Group—meets every Monday at 1:00 pm in the Fireside Lounge. If you would like to join or have any questions, please contact Colleen Both at 952-412-8973. If you love to knit, this is your group!

Quilters—meet first and third Wednesdays of the month at 9:30 am in the conservatory (old youth room). If you need more information, call Carol Christofferson at 218-963-2335.

Quilting = piecing it all together

Toning with a Purpose - Thursdays at 10:00am. Join us every Thursday from 10:00—11:00am in Chapel Hall for an hour of toning using bands and weights as we work on our core and balance. You are welcome and encouraged to work at your own intensity level. All are welcome! Instructor and Lead Teacher: Gloria Thomas.

Update
your
Information



If you would like to receive weekly eblast notifications, please email the church office at laurie@lccniswa.org with the email address you wish us to use. Have you changed your phone number, or no longer use your landline, changed your mailing address, etc.? If so, please let us know so we can update our database.

Sharing Bread Soup Kitchen News

LCC serves the first Thursday of every month. If you would like to volunteer please contact me, Ann Bergin at georgiabergin@gmail.com or 218-820-5511. I'd love to talk with you about ways you can help.



The Lakes Area Food Shelf has completed its building expansion and is using the spacious new addition to serve the highest numbers ever! As Executive Director Tammy Larsen said, "The dream of this building is working!"

Entering 2023, one of the LAFS's emphases will be Food as Medicine and educating our friends and neighbors on using the abundance of fresh produce made available through the local Farm-to-Food Shelf program. Another goal is to further develop a community resource "hub" concept where the food shelf will partner with direct service providers to assist folks in navigating barriers to attaining a healthy life. Thirdly, the LAFS will strive to re-introduce the Lakes Area to its mission, vision and purpose through continued outreach and education.

As part of this awareness, the Lakes Area Food Shelf is hosting an **open house of Thursday, January 25, from 3:00-6:00** for community members, contractors and donors who made the expansion a reality, and others who want to get a first-hand look at the facility and the purpose it serves. This is YOUR Food Shelf! Community is at the heart of the LAFS. Since its founding 44 years ago, volunteers and donors deliver the food, labor, and energy to meet this mission: **"To serve as a trusted community resource by helping our friends and neighbors become hunger free and attain a healthy lifestyle."**

Jean Kraft, Board Member, Lakes Area Food Shelf

The Bridge on 7th

Thank you to everyone who was able to cover a shift during our week at the Shelter.

Thanks also to those picking up shifts over the Holidays.

Director Ann Hunnicutt has taken a position with Crow Wing County. Bill Wear will now take over and also work with Operation Sandwich.

The shelter is in need of Ramen noodles, individual oatmeal packets and coffee cups.

To volunteer with the shelter at any time convenient for you, go to Bridges of Hope and

follow the links for the shelter. If you have any questions please contact Bonnie Stevens 218-966-2125.



WHAT IS A PRAYER CHAIN AT LCC?

Matthew 18: 20

Where two or three gather together because they are mine, I will be right there among them.

A prayer chain is a group of people from LCC, who share prayer requests and commit to pray for needs.

It is called a prayer chain as our members are linked by prayer. Each link represents one person committed to praying for the needs of others. The more linked, the more people are praying. Our current prayer chain has 29 members praying daily. It could be popcorn prayers, the whole list at one time, or one that the Holy Spirit especially puts in our heart to pray for.

In our Sunday bulletin, you will find a prayer list that is open to all to pray for.

The prayer chain at LCC is done by email and also has a private and confidential list that cannot be discussed openly or with family and friends. We honor and respect this. We take this confidentiality very seriously. This allows comfort and trust in those requesting.

Sometimes requests are for a certain time frame. If not, we will continue to pray for a month unless, we are notified that we need to continue. Sometimes we are given the gift of an answer, most times not, and that's OK as we trust our Lord hears us.

There are a few ways to request prayers.

- 1) There are prayer cards to fill out in the pews which can be put in the offering plate and turned into Laurie. Be sure to check the appropriate type of prayer request for your needs.
- 2) You can contact Laurie direct at the office Monday through Friday 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM. by phone : 218-963-2564 or email: lcc@lccnisswa.org
- 3) Ann Lanz, phone 218-963-2268 or email: knitter73@gmail.com

If you feel called to be a prayer warrior, please contact the above.

It is a privilege and honor to be on the LCC prayer chain. We are called to pray.

1 Timothy 2:1

Here are my directions: pray much for others.

Philippians 4:6&7

Don't worry about anything: instead, pray about everything, tell God your needs, and don't forget to thank him for his answers. If you do this, you will experience Gods peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus.







DECEMBER SNAPSHOTS

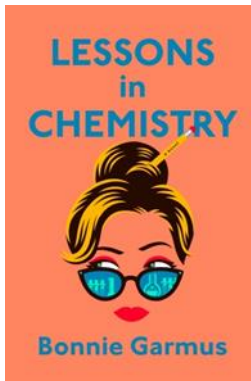


NOVEL IDEAS BOOK CLUB

Tuesday, January 30th

10:30am

Chapel Hall

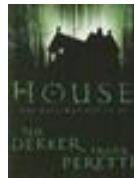


At the beginning, Elizabeth Zott, a gifted research chemist in the 1960's, is not taken seriously by her all-male team who take an unscientific view of equality. She finds herself not only a single mother, but the reluctant star of America's most beloved cooking show *Supper at Six*. Elizabeth's unusual approach to cooking ("combine one tablespoon acetic acid with a pinch of sodium chloride") proves revolutionary. But as her following grows, not everyone is happy. Because as it turns out, Elizabeth Zott isn't just teaching women to cook. She's daring them to change the status quo.

Laugh out loud funny, shrewdly observant and full of characters as vibrant as it's protagonist.

LIBRARY

Love a good mystery, thriller and suspense novel? Check out the books by Ted Dekker, a Christian New York Times best-selling author. Looks like they may warm you up on a cold winter day!



OR you may prefer:

The Lord's Prayer: The Meaning and Power of the Prayer Jesus taught by Adam Hamilton
(large print copy is also available)

The Chosen, I Have Called You by Name by Jerry B. Jenkins (Season 1)

The Chosen, Come and See by Jerry B. Jenkins (Season 2)

The Chosen, And I Will Give You Rest, by Jerry B. Jenkins (Season 3)

Please remember to return library books in a timely fashion. Thank you!

CREATION CARE

The Problem With Bottled Water

Americans drink around **15 billion gallons of bottled water** each year - around 45 gallons per person, according to the International Bottled Water Association. While bottled water may be necessary short-term while traveling, or if tap water is contaminated, it is not a good long-term solution.

According to Consumer Reports, some bottled waters are simply tap water, and have tested positive for **heavy metals, PFAS, and other contaminants**. Since bottled water is typically packaged in plastic, things such as **antimony, bisphenols, phthalates, and microplastics** can leach into the water. The manufacturing and disposing of the bottles are a major source of the many chemicals that end up in our drinking water.

SOME TIPS WHEN YOU NEED WATER ON THE GO: **1)** because microscopic damage can shed **microplastics**, don't reuse single-use bottles - they break down more quickly than sturdier plastics, according to research at the University of South Carolina; **2)** since high heat can damage plastic and lead to chemicals leaching into water, especially when exposed for extended periods, don't store water bottles in vehicles, and never let the water bottles get too hot; **3)** look for labels on water bottles that indicate the water has undergone filtration before being bottled; **4)** when you need water on the go, try filling up a **reusable glass or stainless steel water bottle with tap water**.

If you have concerns about your municipal drinking water or well water, there are local businesses that can test it for you. You can also try several mail-in kits that Consumer Reports has tested: **1) Simplelab Tapscore (mytapscore.com)**; **2) National Testing Laboratories (watercheck.com)** - tests for PFAS, lead, etc. or call 800-458-3330; **3) Cyclopure (cyclopure.com)** - which tests for PFAS. Each differs in cost and what they test for.



LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE CROSS
Church Council Meeting
Thursday, December 14, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

We Assemble in God's Name

Call to Order/Office Reports/Announcements

Meeting called to order by Council President Mike Smith

Present:

Pr. Drew Bakken, Pr. Michelle Ruen, Dean Dalzell, Darrell Paske, Dale Peterson, Mike Smith, Bonnie Stevens, Brian Stubbs, Jenny Stubbs, Bryan Trees and Lyn Underdahl, Deb Van Roy.

Devotion: Dean Dalzell

Officer Reports:

Approval of Last Month's Minutes (November 2023): Jenny Stubbs

- **Motion to approve by Mike Smith; Second by Bonnie Stevens. Motion passed.**

Treasurer's Report (November 2023)

- **Motion to approve by Darrell Paske; Second by Dale Peterson. Motion passed.**

New Business:

1. Pr. Hans Anderson's part time position with our high school age youth has been open and member Emma Trees has agreed to fill this much needed ministry at LCC.
 - **Motion by Bonnie Stevens to hire Emma Trees for 10 hours/week to serve as a part time youth director for LCC's high school members. Second by Lyn Underdahl. Motion passed.**
2. Council will have a festive potluck gathering at Mike Smith's home January 6th, 2024.

Old Business:

1. There will be an adult forum re: the Playground Project January 7, 2024 with John Henke presenting. There were tours of the project site December 10, as well as information presented prior at a temple talk at services. An informational display of the project will continue to be available at church. Cost of the project is to be no more than \$60,000 with considerable funds already raised and excavating costs donated.
 - **Motion by Lyn Underdahl to proceed with the playground project and present to the congregation for a final vote at the Annual Meeting Part 2, January 21, 2024. Second by Darrell Paske. Motion passed.**
2. The Constitution and Bylaws are complete and have been approved by the Synod. If approved by the congregation at the Annual Meeting, Part 2, they would go into effect immediately. They have not been updated since 1989. Changes will be in red for the congregation to preview prior to the Annual Meeting.

Pastors' Reports

Senior Pastors' Report; Pastor Drew:

- It truly is hard to believe that we are in the midst of Advent with Christmas just around the corner. Each year I watch with amazement as our group of volunteers decorate our worship space with birch branches, lights, and evergreen trees. To those volunteers, I say thank you for your gifts and talents to help us to prepare our worship space during the season of Advent.
- I am happy to report that once again we have seen great attendance with 165 joining us for Thanksgiving Eve worship. We continue to see growth in our attendance throughout November and into December. Our attendance for the Musical Extravaganza was 269 for the 9am service and 194 for the second service. Many thanks to our Music directors, staff, musicians and children in making this

service happen. It was truly a great musical worship service.

- After 18 months of work I am excited to announce that the Playground Task Force has finalized the plans for the new playground just outside of the Celebration Center. When you have a chance, please take a look at the plans and if you have questions please join us at an adult forum on January 7th during Coffee Fellowship where John Henke will be able to answer your questions.
- As I reflect back on the past year I am excited at where we have been and how we continue to move forward. We have added back a second Sunday worship service, and we continue to see an increase in worship attendance on Sunday as well as on Wednesday evening. We look forward to the handicap accessible ramp installation and celebrate the handicap accessible doors. We said farewell to Sally Hodgson and Brian Stubbs and welcomed Todd Whipple, Whitney Peterson and Mike Smith to our staff. And just recently, Emma Trees joined our staff as our part time youth director and she is already working with Kari on future events. I am continually amazed at how God continues to work through our congregation. We have much to be thankful for, and I am excited to see where God will lead us in 2024.

Associate Pastor's Report; Pastor Michelle:

- StoneHouse Friday began on December 8th with a wonderful turnout at StoneHouse Coffee in the Riverwood Bank in Baxter. We center our discussion around the Advent Devotional, Come Emmanuel, by Augsburg Fortress. We meet from 12:00 Noon - 1:00 PM every Friday through Epiphany, January 5. Come on the weeks you are able. Men and women are welcome.
- StoneHouse Fridays will continue throughout the winter and spring on Fridays at StoneHouse Coffee. We will be discussing the book The Lord's Prayer by Adam Hamilton in January and February. Some of our small groups have read, or are presently reading, this book. We would love for all our parishioners to benefit from this engaging and inspirational book. Please join us from January 12 - February 16 at StoneHouse on Fridays from 12:00-1:00 PM for this 6-week study. Men and women are invited and welcome.
- Marilyn Quist will be leading a weekly women's Beth Moore Bible Study on Monday mornings from 9:30-11:30 AM on the Book of James. It will begin on Monday, January 22 through March 18, with NO meeting on Feb. 19. Come for a fascinating 8-week study. I, for one, can't wait to dig into the Book of James with a group of spiritually hungry women!
- PrimeTimers is being organized for the year 2024. Programs are being lined up. The January 11 PrimeTimers program will be on Scams, Fraud, and Safety Awareness. The speaker is Brandon Henderson, from the Crow Wing County's Sheriff Department, one of our own LCC members, and Ashley Gage, who will talk about Adult Protection. Bring your own sack lunch. Dessert and lemonade and coffee are provided. See you January 11 at 12:00 Noon. This is a program we all need to hear!! Bring your friends and neighbors!
- Thank you to Stacey Grothem for planning another highly successful Festival of Tables. Tickets were once again sold out. A big thank you to everyone who volunteered, helped, cooked, decorated, etc. in any way. Thank you to Brian Stubbs and his Madrigal group for providing the wonderful entertainment. A beautiful way to start the Christmas season!

Committee Reports:

Worship and Music: Brian Stubbs

- Choral risers will be ordered- these will be a great addition to the many music ministries at LCC! The Music Extravaganza service was the big focus last month for all ensembles. Many thanks to our directors and volunteer musicians in the bell choir, Kings Kids and Senior Choir, as well as to the sound engineers who helped record for our online streaming. Thanks also to Cathy Taylor, who supported all the ensembles. We have a wonderful tradition at LCC of strong musical programming and last Sunday was a showcase for it!
- Budget recommendation: Name tags in the M&W budget be removed and placed in Congregational

Life. This move will bring stability to the M&W budget and allow directors to count on a fixed number for purchase of music titles. (M&W will define the number for directors and they will be asked to stay within that target.)

Stewardship Ministry: Dean Dalzell

No report.

LCC Property Report: Dale Peterson

- Volunteers have been busy again in the new garage. Blown-in insulation was installed in the attic. The opening between the rummage sale drop-off garage bay and the new garage has been completed. And the final electrical work was completed.
- Utilities have been contacted and are being marked for the new playground and the garbage dumpster locations.
- Projects for 2024 include completing the handicap accessible ramp at the north entrance, new carpet in the Narthex and hallways, creating a family/handicap accessible bathroom, painting the conservatory, addressing plumbing needs, and relocating the garbage container.

Social Concerns & Global Missions: Bonnie Stevens

- **Soup Kitchen** – LCC Council will serve Sharing Bread Soup Kitchen on February 1. Please let me know who is able to help.
- **The Bridge on 7th**—Please consider filling a volunteer spot over the holidays. Volunteer spots are opened up to anyone who is able to fill a slot. There are still 8 open spots for the remainder of this week. As of today, the shelter has provided 1,117 nights of sleep for 98 guests. The Open Arms Day Center opened Monday in Baxter. Those shelter guests who need a warm place to stay during the day can take the bus to the center. Ann Hunnicutt has taken a position with Crow Wing County. Bill Wear, a staffer who has been employed with the Shelter since it began, will assume the Director's duties as well as work with Operation Sandwich in the summer. Still needed are Ramen, Oatmeal packets and coffee cups.
- **Central Lakes College Food Pantry**—Working with Kari and Route 56, the Treat boxes for the College were delivered on December 7 along with the Food drive items collected for CLC Food pantry in the narthex.
- **Rummage sale** – Donations are shut down over the holidays but will be accepted after January 15.
- **Global Missions** – The remainder of the budgeted mission funds is being distributed to fund their share of the Fair Trade coffee, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), ELCA Disaster Relief (where needed most) and Lutheran World Relief Hunger program.

Congregational Life: Lyn Underdahl

Touched base with the following church life groups:

- New Member Committee – Jim & Joan Roberts report all is going well.
- Library – Jean & Lori report the following:
 - Budget: supplies were purchased throughout the year
 - 10 new books purchased to add to the Christian Literature, Christian Fiction, Memoirs & Bible Study sections.
 - TinyCat, the online library database, is up & running. Anyone can type <http://www.librarycat.org/lib/LCCNisswa> in their browser to access it. Books can be searched by Title, Author, genre or Subject.
 - Novel Ideas: The 2024 books have been picked & are listed on the door of the Celebration Center. Kari has kindly made-up cards with the 2024 picks. They are available on the library desk in the Celebration Center.
 - The first three picks will be available in the library next week.
- Funeral Committee—Spoke with Sally Hodgson and she told me the groups work well together.

- Soul Sisters—Sharon Endicott leads it. They meet once a month at the church and have completed a variety of service projects over the years. Next February will be their 10-year anniversary.
- Prayers Shawls: Colleen reports they are good.
- Supper Club: Margaret Sommerfeld reports they have 5 Out to Dinner groups this year. This is the most groups since before Covid. Several new members have joined, which is great. She encouraged us to mention their group to new members. They have sign up in the fall when they form new groups.
- Prime Timers: Table Topper's in December had a great turn out. Their committee includes Carol and Mike Smith, Bruce and Sherry Kunkel and Sue and Ron Whipple.
- Prayer Chain: is now led by Ann Lanz.

Those are the groups that responded

Personnel: Darrell Paske

Emma Trees has been hired to provide programming for our high school teens. She will be a part-time employee working 10 hours a week. She assumes the position vacated by Hans Anderson. This action will require a motion formalizing this action at Council.

Youth & Family Ministry: Bryan Trees

Children & Family Ministry: Rachel Gerhartz

(reports combined)

- We hosted our annual Parent's Day Out on the first Sat. in December and we had 30 kids in attendance with 11 youth helpers and seven adult helpers. There was fantastic relational ministry happening between our youth and littles. It was a great day.
- Super Roll Sunday was hectic, but a success. Emma will be helping me starting in January as well.
- Our Reader's Theater Nativity was presented at the Musical Extravaganza and it was a success - lots of participation by the kids and congregation.
- Cross Kids on Sundays continues and attendance is good - at least 20 a Sunday.
- Emma Trees has been working hard at making contacts and presenting our bible study. In January the 9th graders will be joining her for a study on the Apostle's Creed.
- Wednesday evenings continue to go well - Route 56 regularly has 16-18 kids in attendance.
- Sally Hodgson has been very helpful at preparing Cross Kids take home faith bags and the Christmas Eve bags as well.
- Our CYFM Team served Weds. supper this week with many thanks to our loyal volunteers who are always willing to help out.
- Playground Update: our final proposal is available for all to view and check out.
- Again, many thanks to Jon Henke for his guidance and leadership with this project.

Closing Prayer: Pr. Drew Bakken

Meeting Adjourned.

Next Council Meeting: Thursday, January 11, 2024, 7 p.m.

Devotions: Lyn Underdahl

Submitted by Jenny Stubbs

All are welcome at Council meetings. Approved minutes and approved financial reports are available in the church office to any member upon request. If you would like to have something on the Council meeting agenda, please submit it in writing addressed to President Mike Smith and delivered to the office manager in the church office no less than one week prior to the monthly Council meeting, the council meets the second Thursday of the month. If the request is submitted less than one week prior to the next Council meeting it will be addressed at the following monthly meeting.



Christmas Eve



Lutheran Church of the Cross

PO Box 29
5064 County Road 13
Nisswa, MN 56468

Main Phone: 218-963-2564
Web: lccnisswa.org
E-mail: lcc@lccnisswa.org

CURRENT RESIDENT OR

Address label here

Welcoming all people into discipleship

STAFF

Pastor	Drew Bakken	218-961-2014
Pastor	Michelle Ruen	218-961-2013
Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministry	Kari Erickson	218-961-2012
High School Youth Director	Emma Trees	
Director of Music Ministry/Organist	Cathy Taylor	218-961-2053
Financial Secretary	Karen Wiele	218-961-2016
Volunteer Coordinator	Todd Whipple	218-961-2052
Senior Choir Director	Mike Smith	
Organist	Laura Raedeke	
Bell Choir Director	Cheryl Karlgaard	
King's Kids	Carol Smith	
Custodian	Todd Whipple	218-963-2564
ELCA Global Missionary	Bradn Buerkle	
LCC Office	Laurie Hemish	218-961-2011

2024 CHURCH COUNCIL

President	Darrell Paske	Social Justice/Global	Bonnie Stevens
Vice President	Pam Sandelin	Worship & Music	Brian Stubbs
Treasurer	Colleen Both	Youth	Bryan Trees
Secretary	Deb Van Roy	Stewardship	Dean Dalzell
Cong. Life	Lyn Underdahl		
Children/Family	Rachel Gerhartz		
Properties	Dale Peterson		

