



HOLY CROSS
LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Quest

*Transforming the world & ourselves,
together in community,
fellowship and faith.*



March 2023

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JUST A LITTLE *Reminder*

The deadline for inclusion in the April 2023 edition of the Holy Cross Newsletter, Quest, is Monday, March 13.

Articles can be emailed to the Church Administrator at:
admin@holycrosslutheranchurch.net.

The deadline for inclusion in the Weekly Update
is noon on Tuesdays.

Thank you,
Virginia Muller and Sarah Schulmeyer
Church Administrators

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www.holycrosslutheranchurch.net



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Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Herndon VA

STAFF



Faith and Questions

Where have you seen God today? Recently, this question has become one I have been asking a lot, both to myself and to others. It is an invitation to see the world and our lives differently. Much of what we see and experience day to day is exactly where God is made known. All too often, however, I am too busy to see it, or I lack the attention to consciously see the world in a new way – as a place where God is present and active, even in seemingly little things. For instance, there is a brilliant red cardinal that often proudly places himself at our backyard bird feeder. Colorful and majestic in his own way, he represents one of the ways I see the beauty of Creation and can give thanks to the God who made it happen. That is a God-moment. Asking the question teaches me to see differently and to train myself to be a more attentive and more grateful person. So, where have you seen God today?

Speaking of questions, Lent is here, and I am excited for the worship outline that Jeremy and I have set up. The theme is “Ask,” and focuses on questions, specifically those questions we have about faith and our relationship with Jesus. In many circles, questioning

and faith are treated like oil and water, and often seen as proof of “unfaith.” Biblically, however, nothing could be further from the truth. The Bible is filled with stories of God’s people asking questions, often hard, direct questions. Often, as in the Psalms, these tough questions are left unanswered. That is part of faith.

The following two quotes come to mind for me as we ponder a questioning faith. The first is from Paul Tillich, a Lutheran theological active in the mid-twentieth century and my own favorite systematic theologian: "Doubt isn't the opposite of faith; **it is an element of faith.**"¹ The other is from the contemporary writer Anne Lamott:

The opposite of faith is not doubt, but certainty. Certainty is missing the point entirely. Faith includes noticing the mess, the emptiness and discomfort, and letting it be there until some light returns.²

The freedom of grace allows us to be true human beings – incomplete, flawed, and full of questions and even doubts. God knows this. God loves us. The two are not mutually exclusive. That is what we’ll explore a bit this Lenten season.

As always, it is truly a joy and privilege to serve and work among you. Thank you for your various ministries wherever you serve in Jesus’ name.

Pastor Martin



1 Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Volume 2 (University of Chicago Press: Feb. 15, 1975), pp 116-7.

2 Anne Lamott, Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith (Riverhead Books; First Edition: March 3, 2005, pp 256-7

Ask

Sundays and Wednesdays in Lent

February 22 - March 26

Sundays: 8:30 & 11:00 AM Worship

Wednesdays: 6:00 PM - Dinner & 7:00 PM - Worship

Ash Wednesday - Wed, 2/22

Unspoken Questions

Week I - Sun, 2/26 & Wed 3/1

Questions That Divide, Questions That Bond

Week II - Sun, 3/5 & Wed 3/8

Simple Questions

Week III - Sun, 3/12 & Wed 3/15

Questions for the Curious

Week IV - Sun, 3/19 & Wed 3/22

Questions That Change You

Week V - Sun, 3/26 & Wed 3/29

Limit Questions



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LUTHERAN CHURCH

1090 Sterling Road, Herndon, VA 20170

Director of Music and Liturgy



Adjectives are a powerful part of the English language. They can change one's image of an ordinary house to a grand mansion in the woods with a peaceful river flowing through the backyard. Many hymn writers struggle to articulate a piece of our faith poetically. It is an art that began in the early church and still exists today. Isaac Watts, one of the church's greatest hymn writers, wrote the hymn *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* achieving new heights of passionate devotional poetry while using merely five adjectives. This does not include adjectival words used as predicates. The purely descriptive adjectives are: 'wondrous', 'richest', 'vain', 'rich', and 'amazing'. Each stanza is written with strong, clear, simple thoughts.

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, written originally for use in the Communion Service, was inspired by Paul's impassioned declaration in Galatians 6:14, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world." This statement is a climax to his argument that one does not have to become a Jew before he can become a Christian. From this profound statement Isaac Watts derives five stanzas of poetry to portray the Prince of Glory and his throne, the cross.

*When I survey the wondrous Cross,
On which the prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.*

"Survey" suggests not only sight but also contemplation; the deliberate attempt on the part of the communicant to realize what

Christ's death meant to the world. The cross is "wondrous" because in this one instance a Roman instrument of torture and death has become God's instrument for saving mankind. "Prince of Glory" suggests the highest exaltation. Watts believed that Christ had been a "Prince" in heaven before the world was created (Col 1:15-17).

*Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.*

Each person can make a list of his or her "vain things" in which we boast. Watts calls us in this stanza to sacrifice all earthly things for Christ and only boast in Christ's death on a cross.

*See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?*

Stanza three is one of Watts' most beautiful stanzas. The sorrow and love the flow mingled down from his head, hands, and feet is an allusion to the blood that flowed from his side after a soldier pierced him with a spear to prove that he was dead. Watts takes the word "mingled" and transforms a revolting physical death into a spiritual flow of sorrow and love. At the end of this stanza Watts declares the worth of Christ's crown of thorns to be greater than any monarch's crown of jewels.



*Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

In this stanza Watts' intent to assess the value of Christ's sacrifice reaches a personal climax. Although human sin through the ages amounts to more than the material worth of the entire universe, Christ's atonement is still more than adequate. Therefore God needs no further payback. We are simply called to live our life for Christ and give him all that we are.

The thought and meditation that Isaac Watts put into the Passion scripture produced stanzas of poetry that have stood the test of time. This hymn has been sung through the ages and continues to educate Christians throughout the world about Christ's love.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Jeremy Shoop, Director of Music and Liturgy



COUNCIL



Holy Cross Family –

Gratitude and Lent

In preparing to write this month's Quest article, I kept mulling over the Synod's recent 6-week series on Gratitude that I concluded last week and whether that or something about Lent should be my focus. There were several ah-ha moments during that series, and I came to realize that it dovetailed into Pastor Martin's question of, "where did you see God today?" I quickly realized that my gratitude extends far beyond material blessings. Of course, I'm thankful for those and good health, but I kept coming back to the people in my life as God's greatest blessings. The list obviously starts with my wife, Sharon, who is the most tangible representation of God's grace in my life, but it extends to friends and family and how interaction with others brings such fulfillment. I'm especially thankful for my Holy Cross family and the deep and lasting friendships we've formed here.

I often mention the little events that are signs of God's presence. While our church is blessed with strong lay leaders, we always need "new blood" if we are to continue to grow and prosper. So, it was truly serendipitous when Philip Isaiah, one of our newer members, took a new position in Fairfax County and joined our congregation. It turns out that Philip had previously served as President of his congregation in the Baltimore area. After speaking with him over several weeks and prayerful consideration on our and his parts, we

asked, and he agreed to serve as Vice President. So, on a very practical basis, I'm very thankful the Holy Spirit led him to Holy Cross!

I'm also thankful for technology. You probably know that I've spent much of my professional career exploring, employing and examining the value of technology. As a faculty member at the University of Tennessee, I've recently participated in faculty discussions on the impact of ChatGPT. As the deadline for this article loomed, I decided to see what it could do for my "homework" assignment. I thought you might be interested in what it can do. I asked ChatGPT to "write a 300-word essay on the role of gratitude in the observance of Lent." In seconds, I received the following:

The observance of Lent is a period of spiritual reflection and growth for Christians around the world. It is a time of sacrifice, self-reflection, and service, during which believers seek to deepen their connection to God and their faith. The practice of gratitude plays a crucial role in this process, as it helps us to stay focused on the positive and to cultivate a sense of appreciation for the blessings in our lives.

Gratitude is an emotion that has been shown to have numerous benefits for both physical and mental health. It is associated with increased happiness, resilience, and overall well-being. Moreover, gratitude has been linked to greater spirituality, as it encourages individuals to focus on the positive and to develop a deeper sense of appreciation for the blessings in their lives.



During Lent, the practice of gratitude can take on a special significance. It is a time when we are called to reflect on the sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ, and to consider our own role in the world. By focusing on the many blessings we have received and expressing appreciation for them, we can deepen our connection to God and strengthen our faith. This can be done through prayer, meditation, or other contemplative practices that help us to cultivate a spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving.

Furthermore, the practice of gratitude can help us to stay focused on our spiritual goals during Lent. When we approach our Lenten practices with a sense of humility and gratitude, we are more likely to stay committed and motivated, even when faced with difficulties or challenges.

Gratitude can help us to see the value in our sacrifices and to appreciate the opportunity to grow in our faith and spirituality.



In addition, the practice of gratitude can help us to develop a more positive and compassionate outlook on the world around us. When we are grateful for the blessings in our lives, we are more likely to notice and appreciate the good in others. This can lead to greater compassion, kindness, and service, as we seek to share our blessings with those in need.

In conclusion, the practice of gratitude is a vital aspect of the observance of Lent. By cultivating a spirit of

gratitude through prayer, reflection, and acts of service, we can deepen our connection to God, strengthen our faith, and grow in our understanding of God's love and grace. The role of gratitude in the observance of Lent is therefore a critical element of spiritual growth and transformation for Christians at all levels of spiritual development.

While the output from ChatGPT does seem a bit like an undergraduate trying to “BS” their way through an assignment with a relatively superficial treatment of the topic, I was amazed at how many good points it made, and I was thankful that it'd done the work for me! As I use the time of Lent to look inward, I know I am filled with gratitude every day, and I'm thankful for all of you!

I look forward to seeing what else Christ has in mind for us as we share his love!

Yours in Christ,

Sam



FELLOWSHIP



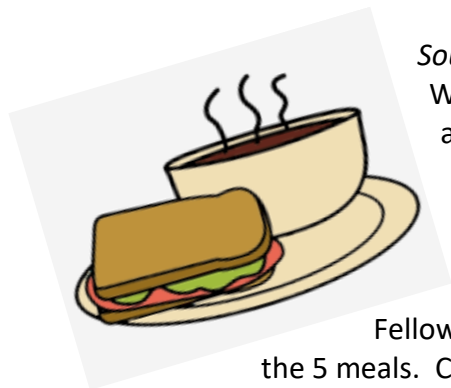
We're all Irish on St. Patrick's Day celebrated on 3/17! So, wear green that day and enjoy my favorite Irish joke:

May those who love us, love us. And for those who don't love us, may God turn their hearts. And if God doesn't turn their hearts, may He turn their ankles, so we will know them by their limping.

And a wonderful poem called "An Irish Friendship Wish":

May there always be work for your hands to do.
May your purse always hold a coin of two.
May the sun always shine on your windowpane.
May a rainbow be certain to follow each rain.
May the hand of a friend always be near you.
May God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you.

Wednesday Lenten Services



Soup & Sandwich Dinners restart on Wednesday, March 1, 2023 at 6pm ahead of the 7pm Wednesday Lenten services. The remaining dates (all Wednesdays) are March 8, 15, 21, and 29.

Fellowship provides the sandwiches for the 5 meals. Congregational members provide 3 soups for each meal. Please let me know if you are willing to provide a soup for one of those days at gei2@verizon.net.



Holy Cross Night Out!!

Don't forget to mark your calendar for Herndon High School's 2023 Spring Musical, Kiss Me, Kate. Our own Jeremy Shoop will be the musical director for the show. Put

Saturday, April 22, 2023 on your calendar for Holy Cross Night at the play and start brushing up on your Shakespeare. Play time, cost, and more details in the April Quest.

Coffee on Sundays

As always, you are invited and encouraged to stop by the Fellowship Hall for some coffee, tea, juice, or water, and good food (there is always fruit!). It's a terrific way to meet up with Holy Cross members and visitors. *On March 12th, come for a slice of pie to celebrate Pi Day on 3.14(159265359...)!*



Anne Geiger
Fellowship Chair



OUTREACH



LINK: March 5th Collection Focuses on Cleaning Supplies

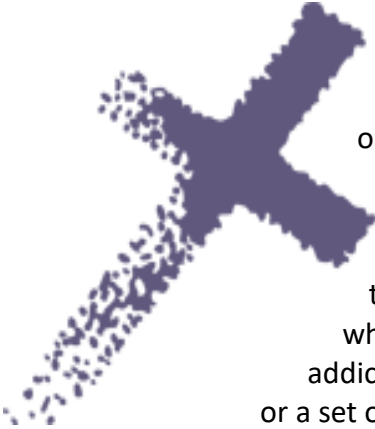
Our regular first Sunday LINK collection on March 5 will help to stock the pantry's cleaning supply shelves. LINK has asked for donations of the items below to provide to families. Small sizes are best for distributing to LINK customers.

- Dishwashing liquid (20 oz or less)
- Dishwasher tablets (bags or boxes will be separated into smaller packages by LINK volunteers)
- Laundry detergent pods (bags will be separated into smaller packages by LINK volunteers)
- Dryer sheets
- Paper towels
- Cleaning liquids such as PineSol, window cleaner, Mr. Clean, 409, etc. (small bottles, such as the sizes available at dollar discount stores)



HCLC Lenten Appeal

During the season of Lent, Holy Cross Lutheran Church will be organizing monetary donations for ELCA World Hunger. Offerings collected during the mid-week services will be forwarded to the organization.



One organization supported by ELCA World Hunger is the East Boston Community Soup Kitchen, which operates in the basement of Our Savior's Lutheran Church every Tuesday. Volunteers offer breakfast, lunch, and dinner to more than one hundred guests, many of whom face challenges of poverty and addiction. Guests can pick up hygiene kits or a set of clean clothes or can access social services. What makes the program even more special is that volunteers treat everyone with respect and dignity that come from a place of love. Guests form connections that foster a sense of belonging and acceptance. With our support, the East Boston Community Soup Kitchen and other programs like it across the country can continue to welcome their neighbors.

ELCA World Hunger also provides funding internationally for a wide variety of services such as refugee support, health care for people living with HIV/AIDS, education advocacy, and farming assistance.



ELCA World Hunger
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Building on the Best Capital Campaign Project Update

The Building on the Best Capital Campaign is excited to report that we are moving forward again on the Restroom Renovation plans!

As reported in February, the church leadership team decided to take most of the RebuildVA! Grant and use it to complete the financial side of the Capital Campaign. With these additional funds, the team is confident we will be able to move forward with our plans, and have reached out to our architects to have final drawings, including Mechanical, Electrical & Plumbing drawings prepared to put the work out for bid.

We hope to have the drawing work complete this spring, and put the construction work out for bid early summer. Stay tuned for updates, or ask any member of the team for an update!

Respectfully submitted,
Deb Reilly
BotB Capital Campaign Team

MOVING FORWARD

Volunteers Needed

CHURCH CLEAN UP



Saturday
April 1st!
No Foolin!

8 am to Noon



OUTDOOR JOBS: RAKE LEAVES, PRUNE BUSHES

*INDOOR JOBS: PAINT, CLEAN CLOSETS,
CHANGE LIGHT BULBS!*





We aspire to keep Holy Cross Lutheran Church a thriving, serving community of God’s people. We each need to make a determined effort to ensure that our offerings sustain us. Your generosity makes all things possible.

Bring your offering with you to worship service at 8:30 or 11:00 am or to drive-thru communion on the 1st and 3rd Sundays at 12:30 pm. You can also mail a check donation to the church (Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1090 Sterling Road, Herndon, VA 20170)

There are three ways to give when you're not in the sanctuary:

1. To give online, simply go to our secure website and click **“Donate”** to set up an automatic donation plan.
2. Download the free **Vanco Mobile** app. Once it’s downloaded, you can use our Invite code, **24A7NT** to ensure you are linked to the correct church, and login with your current Vanco credentials (whether from the GivePlus app or our website's Donation page. If you do not have an account, you will be prompted to set one up. An even easier method of sending a single or recurring check donation to the church is by using Bill Pay with your bank or credit union online account or mobile app. Those payments are guaranteed and are shown in your bank or credit union records. Also, there is no fee to you or to the church.
3. Lastly, you can scan the QR code:



Mask Guidance for HCLC



At the beginning of mask mandates, the Holy Cross Lutheran Church Council voted to follow the guidance of the CDC and local health authorities. Both Loudoun and Fairfax Counties have been determined to have **Low COVID-19 Community Levels** according to CDC guidelines. Accordingly, Council approved relaxing our mask requirement, and masks are now optional at Holy Cross. People may choose to mask at any time. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask. If you are immunocompromised, learn more about [how to protect yourself](#).

What Prevention Steps Should You Take Based on Your COVID-19 Community Level?

Community Burden Levels		
Low	Medium	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines Get tested if you have symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you are at high risk for severe illness, talk to your healthcare provider about whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines Get tested if you have symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear a mask indoors in public Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines Get tested if you have symptoms Additional precautions may be needed for people at high risk for severe illness



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