



HOLY CROSS
LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Quest

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



January 2024

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The deadline for inclusion in the February 2024 edition of the Holy Cross Newsletter, The Quest, is Monday, January 15, 2024.

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

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

Thank you,
Virginia Muller and Sarah Schulmeyer
Church Administrators

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HolyCrossELCA



Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Herndon VA

STAFF



Dear Friends,

At our Congregational Meeting in November, a New Business item was discussed that was a proposal to investigate whether going to one worship service on Sundays would be a beneficial move for Holy Cross. After the discussion, I told the gathering that the Council would undertake this process in the new year, and that the congregation would be kept fully updated as to the progress, and be fully part of that process.

Here is the beginning outline for what such an investigation would look like. As of yet, there are no firm dates, or a time-table set, but this will be one of the priorities of our Council in 2024. Pastorally, I want to emphasize that for any such change to be a pro-active move, it must be based on a missional concern – that is, it would allow us as a congregation to regain some collective energy in our worship in order to become more invitational for newcomers and potential new members. That was the intent of the original motion and I feel strongly that it remains the focus for all our subsequent discussions. We will be doing a lot of praying, discerning, and exploring together in 2024. We will need the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the work of the people of God as we seek God's wisdom for our journey forward. As always, if you have questions or concerns, feel free to talk with me about them.

Pastor Martin

A Congregational Process for Discerning our Worship Gathering Together

Question: *Should we change our Sunday worship practice from two services to one?*

❖ Learn

❖ Investigate how other local congregations have faced this question

- Virginia Conference Congregations (This is the Conference to which we belong – encompassing twelve congregations in western Fairfax and Loudoun counties)
 - If they have switched to one service:
 - When did they change?
 - What were the reasons that led to this decision?
 - What has been the impact since then?
 - If they are also considering, or have considered in the recent past:
 - What processes are being or were utilized?
 - If the congregation chose to remain with previous worship times, what has been the impact of that decision?
- Local Ecumenical Partners
 - Asking the above questions from congregations of similar worship and governance style (i.e., Episcopal, Presbyterian; United Methodist).

❖ Listen to voices from within Holy Cross

- Hold an initial Open Forum with one agenda: to hear people's ideas and concerns regarding having two worship services or one worship service each Sunday.

- What is the concern that people are seeing that led to the initial suggestion to go to one service?
- What is the vision or hope that change might bring?
- What are people’s visions/hopes for remaining as we are?
- Prayer together for the Spirit’s wisdom and guidance.

Goal: Assure people that the leadership is guiding this process, investigating the options, listening to their ideas, and that future congregational conversations will be happening before a decision is made.

❖ Discuss

❖ With the Council leadership:

- Report to Council the findings to date.
- Discuss as Council what the data shows and how it may be pertinent to Holy Cross.
- The Council will implement intentional conversational meetings within the congregation. These could be:
 - Large-group forum style
 - Small-group breakout style
 - Or both

It is possible that a series of these discussions may be necessary.

Goal: Giving the opportunity for the Council to take on ownership as congregational leaders on this matter, presenting a clear path ahead for the community.



❖ Discern

- ❖ The Council will be asked to spend some time in prayerful discernment regarding what is best for the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ related to this decision.
- ❖ Taking the information gathered - from data gathering, from our intentional conversations, and our prayerful discernment - the Council will pass on a recommendation of action to the congregation.

Goal: That the work of the Holy Spirit be a guiding part of our process. That the overall purpose of any decision remain what is best for the mission of the gospel in our community.

❖ Action

- ❖ Decision
 - While the Council has the constitutional oversight of worship times, would it be prudent to allow some sort of final action to be taken by the congregation as a whole. This allows for both a transparency of process as well as an opportunity for buy-in from the community.
- ❖ Report
 - The agreed decision is reported back to the community via verbal announcements and the various printed media we currently use (Weekly Update; E-News; Quest).
- ❖ Implementation
 - If a decision is made to change our worship practices to holding one Sunday service, a date is set to begin. Once again, all communication avenues will be used to notify the change well in advance of the date.

Goal: That whatever decision, it is communal one where all voices have been heard and where we step forward together believing that we are being led by God into mission together.

What Does This Mean?

Looking at Faith with Lutheran Lenses

Adult Study, Sundays at 9:45

In 2024, we are exploring the basics of the Christian faith using *The Small Catechism*, a brief book written by Martin Luther. Come join us as we learn, discuss, and ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus in our world today. Books will be provided.

What Are we Supposed to Do? The Ten Commandments

What Kind of God Calls Us? The Apostles' Creed

How Do We Connect to God? The Lord's Prayer

How Does God Connect to Us? The Sacrament of Baptism
and The Sacrament of Holy Communion

We will also use the book, *Baptized We Live* - another brief explanation of the core beliefs of Christianity from a Lutheran perspective. It was written by the late Dan Erlander, a pastor and theologian who excelled at explaining difficult concepts in an easier to understand fashion.

A way of Seeing

A Way of Hearing

A Way of Teaching

A Way of Following



HOLY CROSS
LUTHERAN CHURCH
Rooted in Faith, Growing in Service

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC AND LITURGY



We don't often get to celebrate the day of Epiphany. It is regularly tossed aside as we recover from numerous Advent and Christmas festivities. One of my favorite hymns for Epiphany is *Brightest and Best of the Stars*. It is both a great hymn from the Romantic period and a poetic expression on the season of Epiphany.

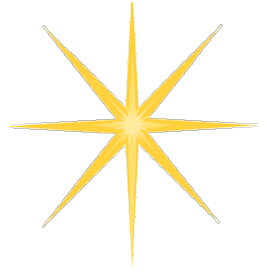
Brightest and Best of the Stars was written by Bishop Reginald Heber (1783-1826), one of the finest Romantic hymn writers. Heber's most famous hymn is "Holy, Holy, Holy" (ELW 413). Heber was born into a family of wealth and position. He was bright and a hardworking student of the Bible, even at a young age. Heber entered Oxford at 17 and soon won two prizes for poetry.

He took orders in the Anglican Church in 1807 and became a rector in his father's church. During his 16 years at this parish, he took on the task of improving hymn singing in the congregation. When he arrived, they were still singing only metrical psalms. He couldn't find the hymns he wanted, especially those that would fit the Anglican liturgy and the requirements of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Heber decided to prepare his own hymnal and invited other poets to contribute, including Sir Walter Scott and Henry Milman. Hymn singing was not firmly established in the Anglican Church at this time, and the bishop of London refused Heber's request to publish a hymnal. *Brightest and Best of the Stars* was thus first published in the *Christian Observer* in November 1811 before his wife Amelia Heber published it in 1827 as *Hymns Written and Adapted to the Weekly Service of the Church Year*.



Images of light, a dominant theme of the Epiphany season, pervade the hymn's first stanza: "brightest," "morning," "dawn," "star" and "horizon." The "Star of the East" that once guided the magi now guides us to "where our infant Redeemer is laid."



*Brightest and best of the stars of the morning,
dawn on our darkness and lend us your aid.
Star of the east, the horizon adorning,
guide where our infant redeemer is laid.*

The second stanza is full of wonderful Romantic images:

*Cold on his cradle the dew-drops are shining,
Low lies his head with the beasts of the stall:
Angels adore him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch and Savior of all.*

The third stanza asks us what extravagant gifts we have to offer:

*Say, shall we yield him, in costly devotion,
Odors of Edom and offerings divine?
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the ocean,
Myrrh from the forest or gold from the mine?*

The fourth stanza reminds us that "the prayers of the poor" are far more highly favored than gifts offered by those simply wishing to "buy salvation".

*Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would his favor secure,
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.*

The final stanza repeats the first exactly, providing bookends to one of the classic hymns of the Epiphany season.

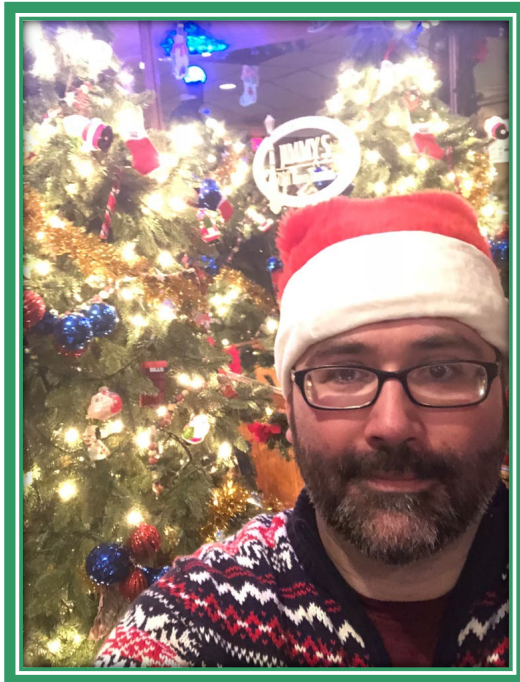
I hope you have a blessed Epiphany season as we continue to celebrate the birth of Christ.

Soli Deo Gloria, Jeremy Shoop, Director of Music and Liturgy



THANK YOU to everyone who supported our **7th Annual Beer and Carols** event at Jimmy's Old Town Tavern! Thank you to those who donated prizes to be raffled off, to those who helped set up and staff the event, to the staff at Jimmy's Old Town Tavern for letting us invade their restaurant and sing carols as we ate and drank, and most of all, to everyone who bought raffle tickets and sang their hearts out! Such a joyful event in the community is a lovely way to show everyone how much fun we have at Holy Cross! Our 8th Annual Beer and Carols event will be next December! *Don't miss it!*

***Thanks to everyone's generosity,
we raised \$2,100 for the ELCA Chaplains Agency!***



COUNCIL



Holy Cross Family –

As we close out the Christmas Season and enter the season of Epiphany, I look forward to the continued presence of the Holy Spirit who Christ sent to guide us in our lives and the life of our church. Last year, I mentioned that an epiphany (in a secular context) is a sudden insight or realization of the essential meaning of something. The true

“epiphany” I found then was that we tend to treat church like the living room--we try to keep it clean and orderly in case somebody drops by. We need to

maintain an attitude of treating others like close friends and family, as we do

in the “family room” -- where we let our guard down and live our actual lives. I think the

genuine welcoming and celebration of all is a key strength of Holy Cross, for it is only with our guards down, that we can be open to seeing the miracles God works in our daily lives and in the lives of those around us.

That approach seems to be serving us well, since our membership is growing, and the sense of “family” is strong as we are moving forward. We will continue to face challenges, but we’ll get through them together with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I look forward to seeing what Christ has in mind for us in the new year and beyond!

Yours in Christ,
Sam

Scout Sunday 2024!



***The 12th principle of Scout Law:
A Scout is reverent.***

Sunday, February 11, 2024 is Scout Sunday at Holy Cross! The 2024 charter for BSA Troop 12 will be given to Pastor Martin by the Troop 12 Chartered Organization Representative Anne Geiger at the 11am service. The Troop 12 Scouts will also hand out the bulletins at the same service. Gold Award and Eagle Scouts will be recognized during each service.

Please let Anne Geiger know if you are/have been a Boy or Girl Scout and are willing to serve at the 8:30 and/or 11 am services as readers, acolytes, or assisting ministers.





*Kingdom Kids participated in a
Saint Lucia Procession on
December 10th*



FELLOWSHIP

Happy New Year!!!

If you missed the October ***Inspiro*** concert (like I did – good story), here is another chance! *Saturday, January 20, 2024, Inspiro Choir concert featuring our own **Jeremy Shoop!** Where?* The George Washington Masonic Temple, 101 Callahan Dr., Alexandria, VA 22301; *When?* 7pm

Inspiro Choir again presents *Music of the Spheres*, a multimedia experience about space which features images from the Webb Telescope with Aleksandra Hamanowicz, from the Space Telescope Science Institute. This concert is a beautiful collaboration at the intersection of science and art. Buy your tickets at www.InspiroChoir.com. I have mine! There will be carpooling – contact Anne Geiger at 703-401-2570.

Inspiro Choir

***2023 BEST OF LOUDOUN WINNER FOR
BEST PERFORMING ARTS GROUP***



Block Parties Continue



Holy Cross is having **monthly social events called Block Parties**. The idea is to have different members of the congregation sign-up to coordinate an event that might appeal to congregation members.

January is open! Will YOU sign up to lead an event? Here are some of the ideas to get you thinking, but we'd would love to hear YOUR ideas as well:

- Pizza & Board Games night
- Hike & visit a brewery/vineyard with live music
- Movie Night
- Bonfire & S'mores with hot chocolate
- Nature Walk
- Attend a soccer, baseball (Go Nats!!), rugby, or cricket game
- Progressive Garden / Dinner Party
- Chili Cook-Off



The Joke of the Month is:

What do you say on the 1st of January?

Last year seems like yesterday!



On that note...as always on Sunday, 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 and a LWR quilt to tie!). It's a terrific way to meet up with Holy Cross members and visitors.

Anne Geiger

Fellowship Chair

fellowshipchair@holycrosslutheranchurch.net



**In Between Services
Join Us!**

EVANGELISM

Beer and Carols 2023 Re-Cap

What a terrific turnout we had for this year's Beer and Carols at Jimmy's Old Town Tavern. Our 7th year! We raised more than \$2100 – our highest total yet – to benefit the ELCA Chaplaincy Fund. Such a fun night as Jeremy led us in several rounds of our favorite Christmas carols. Pastor Martin was all decked out in his festive red vest as he made his way from table to table greeting one and all. A big thank you goes out to Jeremy for all he does to pull this event together each year. Many thanks to all those who donated some great door prizes. A special thank you to Jimmy and his wonderful staff for hosting us each year. Of course, no Beer & Carols event would be complete without Moran & Co. leading the way. From one of Jimmy's favorite waitresses and musical soloists, Sarah has always been our shining star. Emily and Jim were also kept busy serving as guest bartenders. And, Sylvia, our one-and-only twist n' tear ticket machine . . . This year Jeremy and Katy took their Beer and Carols show on the road to PA to rave reviews (just know, Katy we're praying it won't be long until you receive that long-awaited call. . .)



Welcomes New Members

A wonderful Holy Cross welcome to our new members! Pierre Huggins, Lois Ireland, Kathy McMahon, Jim McMahon, Sally McMahon and Ron Hacker. These six members were taken in as new members on Sunday, December 17 followed by a brief cake reception after the late service. What a joy it is to welcome you as part of our Holy Cross Family. Please take a few moments to welcome them as we join in our ministry together.

Looking Ahead to 2024

Looking ahead to next year, I know the new evangelism team will be able to count on your continued support with our evangelism efforts. One of our usual first events is partnering with the Town of Herndon for their annual Easter Egg Hunt. Stay tuned for all the details !!

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Faulkner



COMMUNITY OUTREACH NEWS

Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service



**Monday, January 15
10 AM - 12 PM**

Join us as we assemble Personal Care Kits and Baby Care Kits to send to around the world through Lutheran World Relief.

This is a family friendly event and children are encouraged to come help!



1090 Sterling Road, Herndon, VA 20170

Lutheran World Relief Adult and Baby Care Kits

Mark your calendar now to attend the HCLC-Herndon Women's Club MLK Day of Service on January 15, 2024. There will be service projects for people of all ages to help our neighbors in the local community and throughout the world.

The HCLC project will be to put together personal care and baby care kits for Lutheran World Relief to send to people without easy access to hygiene supplies due to natural disaster, military conflict, or poverty. You can read more about the kits on the Lutheran World Relief website: <https://lwr.org/kits>

You can help in two ways: bring donations of items for the care kits to church by January 14 and/or join the packing event on January 15, 2024.

If you want to get a head start and shop some of the holiday bargains, here are the items we'll be collecting:

Personal Care Kits

- Light-weight bath size towel, dark colored preferred (between 20" x 40" and 52" x 27")
- Bath size bars of soap, (2-3 per kit), in original packaging
- Adult size toothbrush in original packaging
- Sturdy comb
- Metal nail clippers



Baby Care Kits – sizes for babies 6-24 months

- Lightweight cotton t-shirts; **No Onesies** (2 per kit)
- Long or short sleeve gowns or sleepers **without feet** (2 per kit)
- Receiving blankets, medium-weight cotton or flannel (2 per kit) (between 36" and 56" square)
- Cloth diapers, flat fold preferred (4 per kit)
- Jacket, sweater or sweatshirt with a hood or include a baby hat
- Socks (2 pair per kit)
- Hand towel, dark color recommended
- Bath-sized bars of gentle soap in original packaging (2-3 per kit)



Many of these items can also be purchased from our Amazon "MLK Wish List" and delivered to the church. Click [HERE](#) to order.



Don't forget

REMINDER -- Change in LINK and Embry Rucker Collection Weeks

The HCLC community continues to give generously to the LINK pantry and the Embry Rucker homeless shelter. *Thank you!* Beginning in January, we will switch the schedule so that donations on the first Sunday of the month will go to Embry Rucker and donations to LINK will be collected on the third Sunday of the month. We will publicize LINK needs at the beginning of each month.





English Language Learners (ELL)

We started our 21st year teaching English to a very diverse group of immigrants from our community. We also started a Zoom class with five students for our fall semester. We registered a total of 119 students from 14 countries for our spring, summer and fall semesters. Bolivia, Columbia, El Salvador, Egypt, Honduras, Guatemala, India, Iran, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Togo, Ukraine and Vietnam



We completed the fall semester with our annual Christmas party for students and their families on December 11th. Suzanne Baggett started our party by displaying our Christmas carols on the big screen, which made for a fantastic sing-a-long starting with Feliz Navidad. Our students love singing Christmas carols in English and Spanish. We also enjoyed good food and fellowship. It is always a treat for the teachers to meet our students' families.



We always play “Christmas with the Right Family” at our party. Our student’s stand in a circle and each receives a gift, but they are not allowed to open it yet. The game teaches our students to follow instructions by handing the gift to the right or left. Of course, this produces a lot of laughter and cheerfulness.



I’m very grateful to our wonderful teachers: Suzanne Baggett, Jeanne Maysonett, Chip Edward, Cynthia Revera Kurt Birson and our nursery attendant, Luisa Birson. Unfortunately, we have to say good bye to Luisa and Kurt and Cynthia. Wonderful teachers but their commute is too far away. We will miss you. We are looking now for more teachers and need someone before we start our spring semester on January 17, 2024.

We wish everyone a healthy and happy New Year!
Ellen Atwell and the ELL Team

ELL Coordinator Needed!

After many years, Ellen Atwell is stepping down as the coordinator of the HCLC ELL program. We are grateful for her leadership and dedication to helping immigrants improve their English skills.



If you have an interest in helping others and you enjoy organizing logistics, please consider taking on this role. Ellen is happy to train whoever will replace her!

DUTIES of the ELL Coordinator:

- ❖ Oversee ELL program
- ❖ Assist teachers
- ❖ Register students
- ❖ Coordinate and conduct assessment tests
- ❖ Keep attendance records
- ❖ Create English/Spanish flyers for each semester
- ❖ Take the flyers to different stores, also McDonalds and email the flyers to the Herndon Resource Center, which is now part of Cornerstone
- ❖ Support teachers, students and their families.

Contact Ellen Atwell for more information:

ellen.atwell@verizon.net





New Year - 2024 **STEPHEN MINISTER TRAINING**

The first Stephen Minister Training will begin Saturday, January 6th, which will meet once a month for 6 months to receive the professionally designed training founded by the Stephen Ministry. This training will be offered once a year, certifying congregational members to bring Christ's love and care during a time of need.

Hopefully, you are becoming familiar with the Stephen Ministry logos, but the ***Caring Compass*** characterizes 4 vital components for the benefit of our congregation and scope of people beyond it. Compassionate, Skilled, Trustworthy and Full of Faith. How exciting to reach out and care for anyone in distress. To learn more about this powerful training, find it [HERE](#).



What Else Can You Do?

Become a Stephen Minister!

Training begins Saturday, January 6th, 2024. Becoming a ***Stephen Minister*** is a meaningful investment in yourself and others. Will you consider letting God use this ministry to change your life and the lives of others?

For additional information on how to become a ***Stephen Minister*** or a receiver of Stephen Ministry caregiving, please contact: Sarah Schulmeyer at tallulah925@gmail.com or the church office at: admin@holycrosslutheranchurch.net

Sarah Schulmeyer, Program Coordinator

3 WAYS TO GIVE

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 am. 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:

