



The **HOLY CROSS WORD**

Words of news, information, humor and inspiration from Holy Cross

DECEMBER 2018

"Share the Hope"

VOL. LXII, NO. 1

WISMAR'S WISDOM

Dear Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

John 3:16 tells us in such simple yet beautiful words that **God loved the world** so much that He **gave His only-begotten Son** so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life. **Loving and giving are two of the outstanding characteristics of God.** His **love** for His creatures has been evident from the time of creation when He placed Adam and Eve into a perfect garden to take care of it and enjoy its fruits. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve destroyed the perfection of God's creation by giving in to the deceits of Satan and disobeying God's command not to eat from the tree in the middle of the garden.

St. Paul describes the results of that disobedience in Romans 8:22-23: ***"We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."*** Christmas assures us that God has acted in a carefully planned way to save us from the wages of sin. St. Paul describes that act of God in Galatians 4:4-5: ***"But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons."***

God's **love** for a fallen world was so great that He did not even spare His own Son, but **gave** Him up for us all (Romans 8:32) so that we would not die in our sins but instead have God's forgiveness so that we may live eternally in His kingdom.

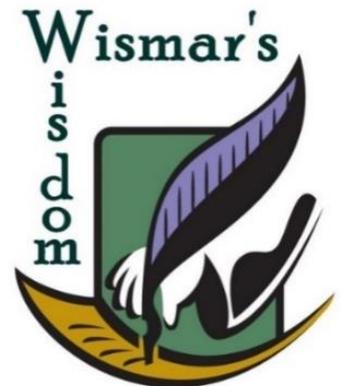
Christmas is a time for **giving** but, even more importantly, it is a time for **loving**. The best Christmas gift was God's Son, our Savior because it was a **"love gift."** The best Christmas gifts that we can give to others are those that are prompted by **love**. **God loves and so He gives.** By the marvelous, even miraculous, power of the Holy Spirit **we also love and so we give.**

May we all enjoy a very blessed Christmas and keep our attention focused on the real reason for the season, that is, the celebration of the birthday of Jesus who came into our world to gift us with the forgiveness of sins, joy, peace with God and the sure hope of a life that never ends.

May God grant you a spiritually rich Christmas by **receiving** His gifts with thanksgiving, **giving** your gifts to Him and to others from a **loving heart** and moving forward in **faith** as you greet the new year!

See you in worship!

Pastor Wismar



***Celebrate God's wonderful Christmas gift to us:
His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ!***



Sunday, December 2 – The Season of Advent begins

Wednesdays, December 5, 12, 19

- 6:15 p.m. – Advent Soup Suppers
7:30 p.m. – Advent Midweek Worship with the theme “God With Us”

Saturday, December 8

- 7:00 a.m. – Men’s Bible Study (*fourth of four Saturday-morning sessions*)

Sunday, December 9

- 11:45 a.m. – Decorating the Sanctuary for Christmas AND
Gingerbread House-Making Activity

Thursday, December 13

- 7:00 p.m. – Board of Directors’ meeting

Sunday, December 16

- 10:30 a.m. – At the late service the Sunday School youth will present the Christmas Pageant

Friday, December 21

- 9:15 a.m. – Preschool Christmas Program

Monday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

- 6:00 p.m. – Carol Festival Service
11:00 p.m. – Candlelight Eucharist

Tuesday, December 25 – The Nativity of Our Lord

- 10:30 a.m. – Christmas Day Festival Eucharist

Tuesday, January 1 – New Year’s Day...Happy New Year!

Sunday, January 27

- 11:45 a.m. – Holy Cross Lutheran Annual Voters’ Meeting
Inclément weather date is Sunday, February 3, at 11:45 a.m.



KEEP SEEKING HIM

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH—LCMS

Worship Services – Sundays: 8 and 10:30 a.m.

5995 Main Street, Trumbull, CT 06611

Pastor’s Study Phone: 203-268-7555; Pastor’s E-mail: pastor@holycrosstrumbull.com

Office Phone: 203-268-4555; Church Office E-mail: office@holycrosstrumbull.com

Website: www.holycrosstrumbull.org

Christian Preschool Phone: 203-268-6471 E-mail: preschool@holycrosstrumbull.com

PASTOR: Eric A. Wismar

MUSIC DIRECTOR: Sally Finck

BOARD OF DIRECTORS’ PRESIDENT: Michele A. Vichiola-Van Wart

BOARD OF DIRECTORS’ VICE-PRESIDENT: Valerie Huydic

BOARD OF DIRECTORS’ SECRETARY: Cliff Schrock

BOARD OF DIRECTORS’ TREASURER: Greg Dowling

NEWSLETTER MANAGING EDITOR: Cliff Schrock

NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION: Mary Schrock



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Holy Cross congregation is to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord (Matthew 28:18-20). We will share the love and forgiveness of Our Lord Jesus Christ with one another, our community and the whole world so that we can take part in the joyous privilege of “making disciples of all nations” through the power of the preaching and teaching the Word of God, administering His Sacraments, and joining together in service fellowship according to the confessional standard of the Lutheran Church (Article III).



For Our Readers:
The Holy Cross Word is best viewed in its full-color format on the church website, holycrosstrumbull.org

Like Holy Cross on Facebook!



After you “Like” us, you’ll see postings of upcoming events, pictures from events and other notices.



GOD’S PURSUIT OF YOU!

Words by Frederick Buechner, novelist, minister, theologian

“Once we have seen [Jesus] in a stable, we can never be sure where he will appear or to what lengths he will go or to what ludicrous depths of self-humiliation he will descend in his wild pursuit of men.”

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NEWSLETTER NOTES

Our next deadline is...

The next issue of The Holy Cross Word is the January edition. The deadline for articles is Monday, December 10.

Please note this earlier deadline,



due to the

Christmas season, and plan ahead to publicize events or share news with your fellow Holy Cross members. You can submit articles to the newsletter mailbox, located outside the church office, or send them via e-mail to:

office@holycrosstrumbull.com.

Advent begins on Sunday, December 2—

GOD WITH US

*“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel
(which means, God with us).”*

— Matthew 1:23

Our Midweek Advent Preparation—“God With Us”

Our theme this year focuses on the ways in which God is with us through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Each week will feature a different word picture of the coming Christ, as found in the poetic and prophetic words of Isaiah. Worship with us and see how Christ continues to be present with us even now.

Wednesdays, Dec. 5, 12, 19

Soup Suppers at 6:15 p.m. ♦ Holden Evening Prayer at 7:30 p.m.

COVENANT TO CARE FOR CHILDREN

Christmas gifts and winter hat and mitten/glove sets due – unwrapped – by December 9

Thank you for your loving Christmas spirit!! This spirit was seen in action on November 18 as Holy Cross members and friends gathered around the “Giving Tree” poster in the narthex to select ornament tags, each having the name of a child that is in the caseload of our “adopted” DCF social worker, Mimose Ulysse-Laurenard. Mimose currently has 29 children in her caseload between the ages of 20 months and 18 years; many of these children are in their tweens or teens. I learned something new in coordinating the project this year that “slime kits” are really popular with the tweens and even teenage girls. And it warmed my heart to find out that quite a few of the tweens and teenage girls wish they could have pretty nails like lots of girls in their classes and just wanted to have nice nail polish and manicure sets. Something so simple to make a young person’s Christmas brighter!! In addition to the special item that each child wishes for, we are partnering with the preschool families to give each child in Mimose’s caseload a winter hat and mitten/glove set.



There were just about 50 tags on the “Giving Tree” this year. If you took one of these tags, agreeing to buy the suggested gift, please remember that the gifts are due at the church, unwrapped, by Sunday, Dec. 9.

Thank you in advance for your generosity for the children on the “Giving Tree” poster. Even though you don’t know these children, you are sharing your love with them, and that is a wonderful and heart-warming gift.

Yours in Christ,

---MARY SCHROCK

Covenant to Care for Children Liaison

PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL

This is the final installment in a three-part series on leadership.

Hands and Feet: Open the former and move the latter to be a leader at Holy Cross

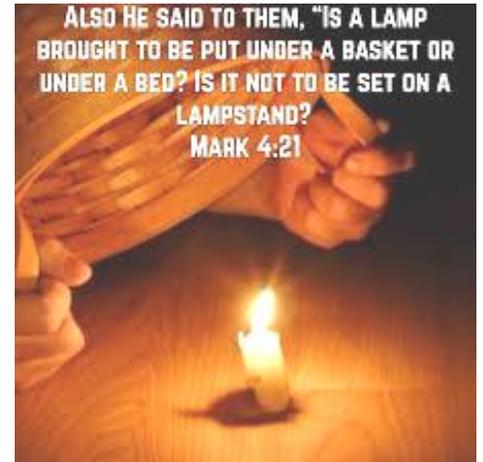
Our calendars are full of winter holiday preparation and events moving through November into December. Advent is upon us, honoring the coming of the Prince of Peace, the Light in the Dark, to our broken world. A wonderful but busy time of year. The Board has been preparing for our upcoming Annual Voters' Meeting in January; and by this point, I hope you have given prayerful consideration to joining the leadership team. Our January slate will reflect your willingness to serve.

Take a moment to consider this: No matter what you have been called to do, the power and simplicity of taking one step forward or opening one palm in faith can change your life and the world. What has been rattling around in your heart and head relative to Bible study, social ministry, evangelism, choir, or church administration? Make a gesture to move beyond your comfort zone – one step, one hand. Moving forward in faith requires a trust in God as our firm foundation; we do not doubt the path will be there even though it is not apparent or visible. Be courageous.

My faith in God, my knowledge that the Holy Spirit enables our efforts, and my love for our church and all of you strengthens me every day. I hope you find your way to move one foot forward, to extend one open hand in a direction not previously explored. Move forward in faith.

Blessings and joy this Christmas season to you, your family and your friends.

In fellowship and service,
 ---MICHELE VAN WART, President
 Board of Directors
 Holy Cross Lutheran Church



A ONE-DAY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY!

Ever wonder what a Holy Cross Altar Guild member does? Here's an opportunity to try it out for only one day. A volunteer is needed to put away the communion ware *after* the 10:30 a.m. service on Christmas Day, December 25. It can be someone who already serves on the Altar Guild and knows they will be attending that service, or it could be someone new...and we would provide training prior to that day.

If you can help, please contact one of the Altar Guild Co-Chairs:
 Edith Skoog, Donna Senft,
 Laurie Vaitkus and/or Mary Ann Schiller.

THANKS A BUNCH!

This column recognizes the gifts of time and talent our church members provide to do God's work in our church and community. If you have an item to include in this column, please jot it down and put it in the "newsletter" mailbox. This month we can't forget to thank:

Jim and Lorraine Finch for taking the clothing donations that were made over the past month to the Summerfield United Methodist Clothes Closet.

Those that have made a commitment to pick up and arrange the flowers for the two altar vases and take down the previous week's flowers:

Edith Skoog, Lorraine Finch, David and Mary Ann Schiller and Donna Senft.

Cliff Schrock who serves as the "Managing Editor" of our newsletter, which entails a monthly obligation to proofread the articles and give them headlines.

Donna DiLalla and Lorraine Finch for being so dependable and helpful in assisting the church office with various tasks one morning a week.

Julianne Nyitrai for spearheading the Cultural Potluck Dinner on November 9. Julianne had help with set-up and clean-up and special thanks to **all those who pitched in to help.**



SOCIAL MINISTRY

Fall food drive meets goal; donations delivered to Bridgeport Rescue Mission

Thank you, Holy Cross! Our "Feed Our Neighbors 2018" food drive was a big success. Our congregation was able to collect 500 non-perishable food items in the months of October and November to donate to the organization of our choice, Bridgeport Rescue Mission (BRM). Our confirmation students helped count and load the 500 items into a vehicle so that we could deliver these items to BRM in person. They were VERY thankful for our donations, and as part of our Thrivent Action Team plan, Thrivent Financial then gave us a \$250 gift card to use for even *more* food items to deliver to Bridgeport. We would like to thank everyone for their generous contributions to this very worthy cause. Well done, Holy Cross!

---STEPHANIE HELMINGER AND
KENDRA NORMAN



Kendra Norman (third from left) is with some of the Holy Cross Confirmation students helping to load the 500 food items for our "Feed Our Neighbors 2018" food drive into a vehicle for delivery to the Bridgeport Rescue Mission.



HOLY CROSS CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

The December spotlight shines on activities centering around the birth of Baby Jesus

Someone's coming, someone special! December is the special time of Advent followed by the joyous celebration of Christmas! We will be busy in school with many preparations and events that are special to the Christmas holiday. Thanksgiving began the celebration of God's blessings and Christmas confirms His love for us. At preschool we will focus on the birth of our Savior, Jesus! Through the curriculum and activities, the children will be exploring all aspects of the Christmas story: the angels, shepherds, Mary and Joseph, the wise men and, of course, the birth of Baby Jesus in a stable. Every year the children participate in a Christmas Play. It is a very special program. We hope that you can join us as we share the Christmas Story. The program will be at 9:15 a.m., on Friday, December 21.

News from our
PRESCHOOL

Registration for the 2019-2020 school year will begin on January 14. Please tell your family and friends about our school!

All of us at the preschool would like to wish the congregation a very blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with God's peace.

In Jesus' Name,

---MICHELE GLENNON

THE WINTER SEASON IS HERE, AND WE REMIND YOU THAT OCCASIONALLY WORSHIP SERVICES ARE CANCELED DUE TO SNOWY AND/OR ICY CONDITIONS.

WE INTEND TO **ALWAYS** HAVE A 10:30 a.m. SUNDAY SERVICE.

Before you venture out, look/listen for a possible cancellation via:

- If you signed up for the "e-mail blast" system, check your e-mail;
- If you are on Facebook, look for a posting;
- WICC radio (AM 600);
- www.wicc600.com (under "Public Organizations"); or
- WTNH-TV or WSFB-TV.



COMFORT DOG MINISTRY

The Soto race highlights the month of November visits

Vicki Soto 5k recap

By invitation we attended the Vicki Soto 5k benefit on November 3. This year we were allowed a 10 x 10 dedicated space with a tent, along with a recently purchased all-weather backdrop and projection-style side backdrop with Addie and Leah's pictures and information, which was made by LCC. The rain and wind didn't detour the 4,000-plus participants or the Comfort Dog team, which included: Addie, Leah and Maggie (Christ the King, Newtown) along with handlers and ministry partners. Comfort blankets were laid on top of a tarp, which made a cozy and dry area for visits. Along with all the participants we also cheered on our Comfort Dog running team! Handlers, ministry partners and Comfort Dogs all took turns walking

the staging area before and after the race. We cheered on the runners at the starting gate and waited for the runners at the finish line. After the race there was plenty of time for everyone in attendance to come see the Comfort Dogs, take pictures, ask questions and request information. We were blessed to share in this very special day and remember to Live, Laugh & Love life just as Vicki did.

Scheduled visits

November 12 was our monthly visit to the Holy Cross Christian Preschool. Our topic was appropriately Thanksgiving. November 26 was our monthly visit to Middlebrook Farms assisted living.

Walking Together, SERVING AS ONE,

---CINDY CICCIA, KATHRYN STRUZIK, LYDIA STRUZIK, JOE CICCIA

HOLY CROSS ALUMNI!

Past member co-authors Lutheran Witness article

Former Holy Cross member Vicki Geda Hanson co-authored an article with Sue Bohlmann published in October's Lutheran Witness entitled "Caring for Caregivers." Both are members of Bethany Lutheran in Waynesboro, Va. While a member of Holy Cross, Vicki held many positions including being a Stephen's Minister.



If you'd like to read this article, a copy is posted on the hallway bulletin board.

---AUDREY PARAY

ALTAR GUILD

A volunteer opportunity awaits!

Do you feel left out of the action at Holy Cross? Contact the Altar Guild!

We welcome new members throughout the year. Most members volunteer for only ONE month a year. Men and teens are also welcome. Speak to one of the co-chairs to share your willingness: Edith Skoog, Donna Senft, Laurie Vaitkus and Mary Ann Schiller.

Thank you in advance!

---THE ALTAR GUILD CO-CHAIRS



Soup Suppers and Midweek Advent Services

Enjoy some great soup in the Fellowship Hall, and close out the evening in the sanctuary, meditating on God's Word.



Wednesdays,

Dec. 5

Dec. 12

Dec. 19

Suppers at 6:15 p.m.



**Holden Evening Prayer
at 7:30 p.m.**

**Our theme this year is
"God With Us"**

How can YOU help?
Please take a turn at providing a pot of soup or finger desserts. Look for the sign-up sheet on the narthex table.

BULLETINS FROM ABROAD

If you are away from your Holy Cross family and worship at another church, be sure to drop off the service bulletin in the newsletter box. Over the past few weeks we received a bulletin from:

Audrey Paray, who worshiped at Bethlehem Lutheran in East Hampton, Conn.



OUR FLOCK

Christian caring and praying at Holy Cross

This is the Shepherds' Commission's "FYI" column letting our members know for whom we have prayed during our recent worship services. Please continue to remember these people in your prayers.

We remember our members:

Myrtle Anderson, recovering from a fall; **Jace Broadbin**, infant son of Brendan and DJ (Senft) Broadbin, going through testing for developmentally-delayed vision; **Bob Burns**, diagnosed with rapidly progressive metastatic thyroid cancer; **Roberta Crocker**, recovering from surgery at Lord Chamberlain after a broken hip from a fall; **Ron Dietman**; **Gary Jackson**; **JoAnne Meyer**; **Barbara Schneider**; **Anita Schoch**, recovering from hip-replacement surgery; **Monika Seyal**; and the homebound – **Bernice Erickson**, **Edna Karacsony** and **Robert Killian**.

During the past month, we also prayed for:

Joe Aniballi, friend of the Dietmans and Thompsons, diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma and undergoing oral chemotherapy; **Twila Bailey**, Lisa Bailey's mother-in-law, for strength and healing following two falls; **Lorie Boveraux**, family friend of the Messerschmitts, with Stage-4 cancer; **Suzanne Burgess**, a friend of Paul Hagberg, fighting cancer; **Carole Daly**, niece of Mary Atkinson, going through tests for leukemia; **Daniel Doherty**, brother of Maura Senft, recovering from quadruple-bypass surgery; **Marti Fischer**, cousin of Carol Burns, who is blind and paralyzed; **Nancy Galasso**, friend of the Van Wart family, who is battling Stage-4 cancer and currently receiving radiation treatments; **Kathy Gardner**, Jim Leslie's sister, recovering from cancer surgery; **Walter Geffert**, brother of Nancy Sabol, recovering from colon surgery; **Colin Hoben**, 12-year-old friend of the Nyitrai family, undergoing a stem-cell transplant for a recurrence of lymphoma; **Caroline Khlar**, wife of a friend of Otto and Mary Atkinson, who is going through her third bout with cancer, with prayers for healing strength and comfort for her and her family; **Ramona Kondracki**, wife of a co-worker of Jim Leslie, who has begun chemotherapy for cancer in her sinus cavity; **Kristen Kravecs**, Bobby's wife, recovery from surgery; **Joan Meyer**, friend of the Dietmans, dealing with memory issues; **Joseph Parker**, Julianne Nyitrai's father, who underwent triple-bypass surgery; **Luis Rivera**, friend of Doris Bernt, who had a lung transplant; **Lee Rossel**, a friend of Paul Hagberg, going through cancer treatment; **Inge Schwarz**, friend of Sabine Bonnar, going through testing following a fall; **Joey Senft**, cousin of the Senft family, with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease); **Karim Seyal**, Monika's husband, prayers for healing following eye surgery; **David Sochacki**, friend of Nancy and Jerry Sabol, following brain surgery; **Lorraine Tamas**, neighbor of the Leslies, who suffered a stroke; **Mike Tavares**, friend of John and Pat Deloge, who is battling Valley Fever and recovering from surgery to place a shunt in his head; **Kevin Vanderhorst**, 21-year-old acquaintance of the Schrocks, undergoing aggressive chemotherapy for Stage-3 testicular cancer; **Dylan Vitucci**, 8-year-old former Holy Cross Preschool student, who has completed treatments for osteosarcoma and is undergoing physical therapy for her arm and body; **Donna Williams**, Lisa Bailey's sister-in-law, for a healthy recovery following an automobile accident; and **Craig Wilson**, son of a friend of John and Pat Deloge, recovering from tongue-cancer surgery.

Other prayer petitions were for:

We continue to pray for protection for those serving in the military, including **Michael Antoniou**, **Timothy Benson Jr.**, **Michael Collins**, **Joao Paulo Silva Gomes**, **Ben Milositz**, **Jake Novak**, **Steve Novak**, **Ryan Rubega**, **Shane Skoog**, **Taylor Turner** and **Daniel Struzik**.

If your friend or family member is on this list, keep us updated on his or her progress. When you have requests for prayers to be included in our worship services, you can e-mail the church office at office@holycrosstrumbull.com or call 203-268-4555 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. weekdays. The Shepherds' Commission will also include the prayer requests in this monthly report. If you would like to be included in our e-mail Prayer Circle, please provide your name and e-mail address to the church office.

---HUGH HUGHES
Shepherd's Commission





Plan to Attend!

**ANNUAL
VOTERS'
MEETING**

Mark your calendar and plan to be in attendance...

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN ANNUAL VOTERS' MEETING

Sunday, January 27, immediately following
the late service (approx. 11:45 a.m.)

(Inclement weather date: Sunday, February 3, at 11:45 a.m.)

LOOKING DEEPER INTO THE BIBLE

Lesson 23: Understanding 1st Corinthians, Chapter 14

A monthly Bible study involving Scripture reading and explanation, verse by verse

We begin with **The Reading**: 1st Corinthians, Chapter 14 (RSV)



Public Worship—The Use of Spiritual Gifts

2, The worth and use of spiritual gifts; a, Prophecy versus tongues

¹Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. ²For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. ³On the other hand, he who prophesies speaks to men for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. ⁴He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. ⁵Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified. ⁶Now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how shall I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? ⁷If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? ⁸And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? ⁹So with yourselves; if you in a tongue utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. ¹⁰There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning; ¹¹but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. ¹²So with yourselves; since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

¹³Therefore, he who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret. ¹⁴For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵What am I to do? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also. ¹⁶Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say the "Amen" to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷For you may give thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified. ¹⁸I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all; ¹⁹nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

²⁰Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; be babes in evil, but in thinking be mature. ²¹In the law it is written, "By men of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord." ²²Thus, tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers. ²³If, therefore, the whole church assembles and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? ²⁴But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, ²⁵the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

2, The worth and use of spiritual gifts; b, Rules regarding the use of spiritual gifts

²⁶What then, brethren? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. ²⁷If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. ²⁸But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silence in church and speak to himself and to God. ²⁹Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. ³⁰If a revelation is made

"Looking Deeper," continues on Page 9

“Looking Deeper,” continues from Page 8

to another sitting by, let the first be silent. ³¹For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged; ³²and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. ³³For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

As in all the churches of the saints, ³⁴the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. ³⁵If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. ³⁶What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached?

³⁷If any one thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. ³⁸If any one does not recognize this, he is not recognized. ³⁹So, my brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; ⁴⁰but all things should be done decently and in order.

We move into The Study: A reminder that Corinth was the business center of Greece, and Paul had visited and preached to the people there during his second missionary journey. This first letter to the Corinthians addresses the problems of Christians in a local church, primarily their relationships with one another.

Chapter 11 began a section on Public Worship, or some might refer to them as Public Worship Problems, which ends with Chapter 14 being discussed in this month’s newsletter. Chapters 12 and 13 focused on “the use of spiritual gifts.” Chapter 14 starts in Verse 1 with Paul writing that love is an element of the fruit of the spirit that is there for all Christians. Paul ranks love above spiritual gifts but not in a way that makes us want to discard spiritual gifts, but in describing which ones we should prefer. In short, he says, use the gifts that are more useful and valuable for you. Rank or organize spiritual gifts in a way that makes them useful and orderly for each person. Specifically, speaking in tongues is described as more useful for the person speaking, but prophesying is helpful for the church. The former is just noise that makes no sense. The message is to build up the church as a whole, not as pieces.

Beginning with Verse 15, Paul has a message about praying in public in a manner to be understood, and to pray with our minds and with the spirit. In Verse 19 Paul makes it clear: a few words spoken clearly from the mind is much better than thousands spoken in unintelligible sounds.

More nuggets: Do not be childlike in your thinking; instead, be infant-like regarding evil but adult-like in your thinking. Don’t dwell on the bad things, put your focus on helpful things. The takeaway from Verse 26 is that all things must be done for the good of the church. Think of how the Spirit gives us things when we need them: a hymn, an interpretation, a revelation or a reading. God does not provide these things to confuse us but to inspire and bring peace and order. This is what orderly worship is all about.

Next month: 1 Corinthians, Chapter 15

---CLIFF SCHROCK



CELEBRATING DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



DEC. 2:	RILEY RICCIO	DEC. 12:	COLE DOWLING
DEC. 3:	AUDREY PARAY		JORDAN MATTHEWS
DEC. 5:	CHRISTY HALLS	DEC. 13:	SARAH BOGEN
DEC. 6:	STEPHEN DOMANICK		KAI WISMAR
DEC. 7:	JIM FINCH	DEC. 23:	ETHAN ANDERSON
	BRYAN LISCINSKY		MARK POLLEX
DEC. 8:	PATSY CERONE, JR.	DEC. 26:	JOHN SELK
	ROBERTA CROCKER	DEC. 27:	BILLY DOMANICK
DEC. 10:	JOANNE BOGEN		SARAH POLLEX
	ZACHARY WENDLING		MANFRED SCHLAICH
		DEC. 31:	EFFIE SOLAZ