



The **HOLY CROSS WORD**

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

DECEMBER 2016

"Share the Hope"

VOL. LX, NO. 4

WISMAR'S WISDOM

Dear Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

December is a month of giving and receiving. It all started with God's greatest gift of sending His only-begotten Son on that first Christmas to be our Savior and Lord. John 3:16 (NIV) says it so clearly: **"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."** The Apostle John states in his first letter: **"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"** (1 John 3:1 NIV)

As the Holy Spirit helps us to grow each day as the children of God, we also grow in our loving and giving, because loving and giving are two important characteristics of our God. Just like children imitate their parents, so we also are to imitate God. God delights in loving and giving. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments give overwhelming evidence of this truth. Jesus taught that **"it is more blessed to give than to receive."** (Acts 20:35 NIV)

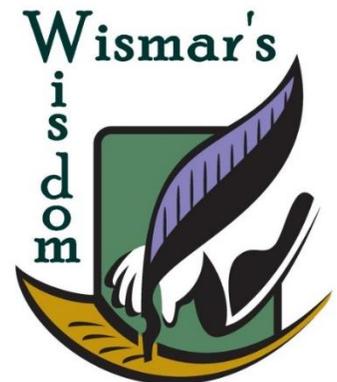
Where do you find yourself this December as it relates to loving and giving? Many Christians experience how true these words of Jesus really are. In this season of giving and receiving where do you find your greater joy? Is it in giving or in receiving? Are you among those people who get more joy and excitement from searching for and finding the right gifts for the special people in their lives?

During this season of giving and receiving take some time to reflect on the words of Jesus that **"it is more blessed to give than to receive"** and pray for the Holy Spirit's power to grow in the grace of giving. And may that giving be more than just selecting gifts for those you love. May that giving extend to supporting the work of the Lord through Holy Cross and other charitable organizations as you give generously of your time, abilities and financial resources to bring the love of Jesus into the lives of others.

Merry Christmas and may this Christmas be a time of joy as you reflect on the greatest gift of all – God's only begotten Son to be your Savior. And in appreciation of and response to that best gift of all may you also experience the truth that it is really more blessed to give than to receive.

See you in worship!

Pastor Wismar



Celebrate Jesus...Our Greatest Gift!





Wednesdays, November 30 and December 7, 14, 21

- 6:15 p.m. – Advent Soup Suppers
7:30 p.m. – Advent Midweek Worship with the theme “From Heaven Above”

Sunday, December 4

- 11:45 a.m. – Family Fun for all ages after the 10:30 service!
Decorating the Sanctuary for Christmas **AND**
Gingerbread House-making activity

Tuesday, December 6

- 5:00 p.m. – Holy Cross serves Community Supper at St. John’s Episcopal-Bpt.

Thursday, December 8

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

Saturday, December 10

- 8:30 a.m. – Altar Guild hosts “Deep-Cleaning” in the Sanctuary

Sunday, December 11

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

Friday, December 23

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

Saturday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

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

Sunday, December 25 – The Nativity of Our Lord

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

Monday and Tuesday, December 26-27 – The Church Office will be closed

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

NOTE: Only one service on this day, at 10:30 a.m.

Sunday, January 22

- 11:45 a.m. – Holy Cross Lutheran Annual Voters’ Meeting
Inclement weather date is Sunday, January 29, at 11:45 a.m.



HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH—LCMS

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

Worship Services – Sundays: 8 and 10:30 a.m.; Second/Fourth Mondays of the month: 7 p.m.

PASTOR: Eric A. Wismar

MUSIC DIRECTOR: Sally Finck

BOARD OF DIRECTORS’ PRESIDENT: Kerry Geffert

BOARD OF DIRECTORS’ VICE-PRESIDENT: Michele Van Wart

BOARD OF DIRECTORS’ SECRETARY: Jeannie Mones

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 at 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.



WORDS FOR CHRISTMAS

By Irenaeus, third-century Christian apologist

“Because of His boundless love, Jesus became what we are that He might make us to be what He is.”

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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 all articles is Monday, Dec. 12. **Please note this**

earlier deadline,

due to the Christmas season, and plan ahead to meet the adjusted deadline. You can submit articles to the newsletter mailbox, located outside the church office, or send them via e-mail to:

office@holycrosstrumbull.com





Our Midweek Advent Preparation—
Wednesdays, Nov. 30 and Dec. 7, 14, 21

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

Our theme is “From Heaven Above,” with a focus on the divine gifts that come down to us through the birth of Jesus—The Gifts of Hope, Love, Peace and Life

Our Christmas Celebration—

Saturday, Dec. 24, at 6 p.m.: Carol Festival Service

Saturday, Dec. 24, at 11 p.m.: “The Gift of Joy” – Candlelight Eucharist

Sunday, Dec. 25, at 10:30 a.m.: “The Gift of Glory” – Festival Eucharist

Join us on Wednesdays in Advent and on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day to “unwrap” the gifts of Hope, Love, Peace, Life, Joy and Glory!

COVENANT TO CARE FOR CHILDREN

Christmas gifts due by December 11; immediate need this fall met with generous support

On November 20 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 26 children in her caseload between the ages of 1 and 17. 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 Wednesday, Dec. 11. This year, in addition to the special item that each child wishes for, each child will also be receiving a winter hat with gloves/mittens.



I also wanted to report on the immediate need presented to the congregation on October 30. Our Covenant to Care for Children (CCC) supervisor had asked both our congregation and one other to provide items for a 17-year-old boy who had been neglected by foster parents. Due to some very unfortunate circumstances, this boy was in need of the basics – clothing, shoes and toiletries – as well as reading books and a writing journal. By the following Sunday, I had an assortment of items to give to the CCC supervisor: shoes and shirts, toiletries, reading books, a journal and gift cards to both Target and Walmart. The CCC supervisor and/or the boy’s social worker will take him shopping for other necessities with the gift cards (additional clothing, socks & underwear, winter outerwear, toiletries). As of early November, this young man had been placed into a temporary foster home, awaiting a permanent placement.

Thank you so very much for your concern and generous spirit in helping out this young man. And, thank you in advance for your Christmas spirit of generosity for the children on the “Giving Tree” poster. You don’t know these children, but you are sharing your love with them, and that is a positive and heart-warming gift.

Yours in Christ,

---MARY SCHROCK

Covenant to Care for Children Liaison

BREAKFAST & ARTISTS RECAP

Citing Jesus and Bartimaeus, speaker delivers message of helping those in need of aid

I was going to begin this article by reporting how many people were in attendance at the 7th Annual Breakfast & Artists on November 12. I decided that this number doesn't really matter. The Fellowship Hall was full and we heard a powerful message from our guest speaker, Reverend Terry Wilcox, Executive Director of the Bridgeport Rescue Mission. His message was to DO SOMETHING, and he used the interaction of Jesus with blind Bartimaeus as his focal point. Isn't that what we have been talking about? What can YOU do? I have chaired this program for seven years and this year I laughed, but I was also brought to tears. Those of you who were lucky enough to share in this morning I'm sure felt the same way. I have received more than \$1,700 in donations and I am humbled to be able to donate these funds to the Rescue Mission.

Thank you to everyone that helped. No matter what your role was, it mattered.

If you want to learn more about the Bridgeport Rescue Mission, please take a look at this organization's website—bridgeportrescuemission.org.

Peace,
--CINDY CICCIA



Fabulous food, a fantastic speaker and fanciful and fun products offered by our artists...what a wonderful morning at Holy Cross! This year's Breakfast & Artists event boasted quite an array of hot and cold breakfast food, served with plenty of smiles. And after a hearty meal, our souls were fed through the meaningful words spoken by Rev. Wilcox, pictured above with Cindy Ciccia. And, of course, before and after the breakfast and speaker, all those in attendance had the opportunity to browse the seven different artists' stations set up in the narthex and hallway. Pictured below is Sabine Bonnar with her display of original paintings.





In November the Bridgeport Rescue Mission provided more than 57,000 meals and provided 3,000 nights of safe shelter.

--Simple fact from our Social Ministry Commission

But he [Bartimaeus] cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"
-Mark 10:48b



PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL

Town Hall focuses on Vision 2020 Strategic Goals

On Sunday, November 20, a group of dedicated members met in the Froehlich Fellowship Hall for a Town Hall Meeting. The topics were the proposed strategic goals of Vision 2020 and the 2017 Holy Cross budget. Both topics will be on the agenda of our Annual Voters Meeting on January 22; however, member input at this point benefits our decision making in January.

Before addressing the discussion that occurred, I believe it necessary to point out that of those attending, there were only two or three individuals under the age of 40 and at least half the group was probably age 60 or above. Not an uncommon mix at our open meetings. Not necessarily a healthy mix either.

Like any member organization, Holy Cross depends on its membership to make things happen. Our Pastor is our spiritual shepherd, but the congregation, led by the Board of Directors, is responsible for the day-to-day affairs. Administering the budget, hiring and paying staff, keeping our valuable buildings and property in order – all responsibilities of the membership. So, too, are the responsibilities for providing worship services, coordinating with Pastor to educate our youth, and ensuring a viable ministry through care for our members and growth of the congregation.

Thus it was fitting to begin a discussion of the Vision 2020 goals with the goal of cultivating new leadership. The viability of our congregation and the important work being done – i.e., spreading the Gospel – depends on this. It will be important for every member to identify where she or he can contribute to the mission and vision of Holy Cross.

To help you identify your spot, we plan to increase and diversify the manners in which we communicate with you. The Town Hall was the first of several to be held in the next year. We will be using both printed and electronic media. We will schedule seminars and programs to provide more opportunities to connect with your church.

Building connection with one's church family is important to developing good worship habits. We know that that connection is best started as a child. Therefore, we have multiple goals that will engage our youth in the active life of our church. But this works only if parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, demonstrate their support by making sure the youth show up.

One Town Hall attendee noted that we have developed a lengthy list of strategic goals – an accurate observation. Holy Cross has an extensive ministry and our goals reflect the range, diversity and breadth of that ministry. The success of the goals, however, will depend on the support and involvement of all our members. That's you. It's about your stewardship. It's about how you are using the gifts that God has given you. It's about you taking responsibility for the future of your church, Holy Cross. It's up to you.

In His Service,
---KERRY GEFFERT
Holy Cross President



*And lo,
I am with you
ALWAYS...*
—Matthew 28:20

Calling Volunteers!

DEEP-CLEANING of the ALTAR/SANCTUARY

DAY: Saturday, December 10

TIME: 8:30 a.m.

Wash, polish and dust to prepare our church for the holidays

Bring your favorite rag –a HOLeY sock!



COMMUNITY SUPPER

Serve the Lord by serving the needy a welcome meal at our monthly commitment in Bridgeport

An inordinate amount of Community Supper recipients arrived on the first day of November. Nearby Bridgeport Rescue Mission had warned St. John's (who warned us) that while their kitchen was being renovated, people would be sent over. So we were prepared with extra food and extra smiles for some people we had never seen before. We were bombarded the first half hour of serving with lots of folks. But servers Kerry Geffert, Jim Leslie, Marissa and Alexis Rodriguez, Mary Schrock, Brendan and Savi Semon (from Grace Lutheran-Stratford) and Laurie Vaitkus hustled efficiently to serve 116 meals that evening. Previous to that day, Mary Schrock had applied for a Thrivent Action Team (this is basically a grant, or seed money) to finance the meal. Early that Tuesday, she assisted in shopping for the groceries. Since she has to supply a report to Thrivent, she came early to record the work of cooks: Lorraine Finch and Grace-Stratford members Helen Harper, Anna Schaaf, Diane Hintz Schyhol and Hank Saunders. To ensure that future Community Suppers can be financed, it would be helpful if other Thrivent members could apply for an Action Team.

As you know, Holy Cross is responsible for buying the food, preparing and serving the meal on the first Tuesday of the month at St. John's Episcopal. The next community supper for which Holy Cross is responsible for cooking and serving is on Tuesday, December 6. If you can volunteer your time, please put your name on the sheet found on the narthex table.

---DAVID and MARY ANN SCHILLER



Serving Hands Live Generously!

Above, left to right, are those who served as cooks on the first Tuesday of November: Helen Harper, Mary Ann Schiller, Anna Schaaf, Hank Saunders, Diane Hintz Schyhol, Lorraine Finch and David Schiller.

Ready to serve the food on Nov. 1, in the picture below are, from left, Mary Schrock, Alexis Rodriguez, Marissa Rodriguez, Mary Ann Schiller, Saviden Semon, Brendan Semon, David Schiller and Jim Leslie. Not pictured are Kerry Geffert and Laurie Vaitkus.



WORDS ABOUT THE WORD: JESUS!

Penned by Michael Card, in his book *Immanuel: Reflections on the Life of Christ*

To say that Jesus is the Word is another way of saying he is God speaking to us. While we struggle with our clumsy words, God needs only one Word to perfectly communicate the depth and mystery, the passion and the overwhelming grace of who He is. By that Word, Light became a living being. Manna became man. Wisdom became a person. In Him, Life came to life; all that God is came to us in that One Final Word we call Jesus.

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LOOKING DEEPER INTO THE BIBLE

Lesson 2: Understanding 1st Thessalonians, Chapter 2

A monthly Bible study involving Scripture reading and explanation

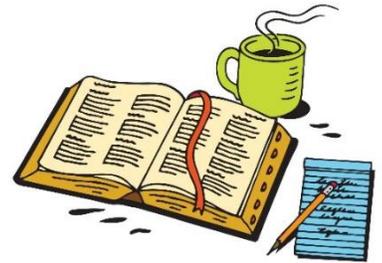
The Reading: 1st Thessalonians, Chapter 2

¹You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, ²but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. ³For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, ⁴but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. ⁵As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; ⁶nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, ⁷though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. ⁸So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

⁹You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰You are witnesses, and God also, how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was toward you believers. ¹¹As you know, we dealt with each one of you like a father with his children, ¹²urging and encouraging you and pleading that you lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

¹³We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you believers. ¹⁴For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you suffered the same things from your own compatriots as they did from the Jews, ¹⁵who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out; they displease God and oppose everyone ¹⁶by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. Thus they have constantly been filling up the measure of their sins; but God's wrath has overtaken them at last. ¹⁷As for us, brothers and sisters, when, for a short time, we were made orphans by being separated from you—in person, not in heart—we longed with great eagerness to see you face to face. ¹⁸For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, wanted to again and again—but Satan blocked our way. ¹⁹For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? ²⁰Yes, you are our glory and joy!

Study: The Apostle Paul's first letter to the Christians at Thessalonica is often admired as a "model letter." Many of Paul's letters are written as a way to solve a problem or explain how a congregation should react to a situation. In Chapter 1, which we could call "pleasant and joyful reminiscences of a blessed relationship," Paul writes with a personal greeting, prayer, encouragement and thanksgiving. He compliments them on being a model church, showing how Christians are linked together.



Chapter 2 could be given the theme: persistence overcomes all evil obstacles. Having just complimented the Thessalonians on abolishing idols and being so strong in their faith that they are content to "wait" for Jesus' return, Paul makes comments about the work he did among them, and his style and manner of preaching. He remarks that he was resolute and courageous (Verse 2), spoke with sincerity and simplicity (Verse 3), and without greed or flattery (Verse 5) or the need to be praised or complimented (Verse 6). If you put all those traits together you have a great model for preaching.

In Verses 7-10, Paul summarizes his ministry at Thessalonica as being like a tender nurse; that he, Silvanus and Timothy cared so deeply for the church that they gave of themselves night and day and did their best to not be a burden on the Christian community. And in an important comment, Paul makes a special note about being pure and blameless among the believers, making special emphasis that he and the others lived upright among the believers. This is important to show how much Paul and his fellow missionaries wanted to be role models. He writes that not only were they nurse-like, but each believer was administered to like a father to a child, being particular to encourage and urge the church members to live their lives in a worthy fashion pleasing to God.

Paul makes the point in Verse 13 that, with all thanks to God, the Thessalonians saw him as God's representative on earth; they heard a man speak, but they accepted his words as God's and let the words work inside their hearts.

In Verses 14-16, Paul bemoans the suffering the church went through, as Jews had killed Jesus and the prophets and hindered the preaching of Paul and his colleagues, among other things. This was very displeasing to God but ultimately His will has won out.

In the final verses of Chapter 2, Paul writes about a situation of being separated from the Thessalonians and a desire to get back to them physically, but Satan blocked his way. This is likely referring to Satan using humans in a way that blocked Paul's plans for we know that Satan wants to defeat God and His plans. But Paul revels in how the Thessalonians are his "glory and joy" and that having them be ready for the Lord's coming is his hope, joy and crown of boasting.

---CLIFF SCHROCK

HOLY CROSS CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

Children will be enthusiastically active with Christmas events

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. This month at the preschool we will focus on the birth of our Savior, Jesus! The children will be exploring all aspects of the Christmas story: angels, shepherds, Mary and Joseph, the wise men, and of course, the birth of baby Jesus in a stable. As we do every year in December, the children will once again present a special Christmas 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 23.



Thank you to all who participated in our holiday pie fund-raiser. We raised \$305 for our school.

Registration for the 2017-2018 school year will begin on January 17. 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

LOCAL FOOD PANTRY

Items most-needed for the Trumbull Food Pantry

- Jelly
- Applesauce
- Rice
- Condiments (*ketchup, mayonnaise, mustard, salad dressing, oil, vinegar*)
- Canned fruit
- Dried beans
- Paper goods (*paper towels, tissues, toilet paper, napkins*)



From the Food Pantry's website – "The number of families using the pantry has changed drastically over the last few years as more and more people struggle to feed themselves and their families."

Please help us help our community. The collection box is in the narthex.
---SOCIAL MINISTRY COMMISSION

**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.



Soup Suppers and Mid-Week Advent Services

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



**Wednesdays,
Nov. 30
Dec. 7
Dec. 14
Dec. 21**

Suppers at 6:15 p.m.



**Holden Evening Prayer
at 7:30 p.m.
Our theme this year is
"From Heaven Above"**

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.

OPERATION GRATITUDE – WRITE A LETTER!

Letter-writing campaign brings messages of salute

As I write this it is Veterans Day. I spent time this morning reading the beautiful articles sent to me from our Holy Cross family and friends. A total of 70! How appropriate on this day to remember and salute our veterans. I have to say I was moved as I read each letter and viewed each drawing. I would like to share with you a few. Each sentiment is worded as it was submitted.

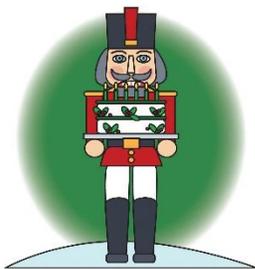
- ❖ *“I don’t know what state you are from but Connecticut is truly a beautiful state especially now that the trees (especially the maples) are changing from the summer greens to the vibrant reds, orange and yellows.”*
- ❖ *“CEO—recently I read that could mean Chief Encourager of Others. Praying that you know God’s abiding presence this week and may you have some opportunities to be a CEO this week. I am grateful that I live in the United States of America. And I appreciate your service to the ‘Star Spangled Banner’ country.”*
- ❖ *“Dear Brave One, Words can’t express how very grateful we are for your dedication and service to our great country.”*
- ❖ *“Dear Hero, People like you make the world go round. To be a citizen of the United States means to support democracy, but it is those who serve in the armed forces who truly represent our country the most.”*
- ❖ *“Dear Soldier, thank you for risking your life for our country.”*
- ❖ *“Dear Hero, I teach a Sunday School class of preschoolers, ages 3-5 in Connecticut. We are currently in the beautiful fall season and the children have made a picture for you. The children have some thoughts they wish to share with you. They think that you must be very strong to carry all that Army stuff. We will pray for you. We have a great respect for your bravery and sacrifice.”*
- ❖ *“Dear Hero, Thank you so much for your service. It is greatly appreciated. I hope your days have been joyful in some way. I have a brother currently in the military. I am 26 years old from Texas. I love to sing and play piano. I also love the outdoors.”*
- ❖ *“Dear Hero, Thank you for your service to our country and your sacrifice in keeping us safe. Write back and tell me about yourself if you are so inclined. In the meantime, remember you are precious and being prayed for daily.”*
- ❖ *“Dear Hero! First of all, we express our deep and sincere gratitude for your service to the USA. Are you a baseball fan? We are proud of you and keep you, and all our military personnel in our prayers.”*
- ❖ *“Dear Trooper, I am a veteran from 1961-1963. I look back and a glow comes to my memory. Some day, 50 years from now, you will have great joy remembering you served our country with honor.”*

*Care Package
Letters*



With gratitude and peace,
---Cindy Ciccia

CELEBRATING DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



*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
EMMA FENGLER	SARAH POLLEX
DEC. 10: JOANNE BOGEN	MANFRED SCHLAICH
	DEC. 31: EFFIE SOLAZ

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 a "thank you" to include in this monthly column, please jot it down and put it in the "newsletter" mailbox.

To **Cindy Ciccia** for putting together the October display case for Operation Gratitude. Thanks also to Cindy for coordinating and promoting the Operation Gratitude letter-writing project.

To **Edith Skoog** for her weekly commitment to picking up and arranging the flowers for the two altar vases.

To the Holy Cross members who helped with either shopping, cooking or serving at the November 1 Community Supper at St. John's Episcopal-Bridgeport: **Lorraine Finch, Kerry Geffert, Jim Leslie, Alexis Rodriguez, Marissa Rodriguez, David and Mary Ann Schiller, Mary Schrock and Laurie Vaitkus.**

To **Andrew Struzik** for the work he did in refurbishing the secondary office computer, bringing it up-to-date with more memory and a bigger hard drive.

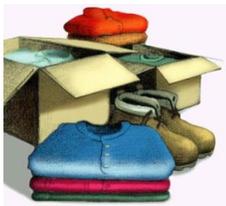
To **Linda Suhr** for continuing to serve as the volunteer in the church office.

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

To **Jim and Lorraine Finch** for putting together the beautiful Thanksgiving-themed display case.

To **Cindy Ciccia** for the work she did to coordinate this year's Breakfast & Artists event on November 12. Cindy is the first one to say this was a team effort, which means that special thanks go to all those who helped with either set-up the night prior to the breakfast, the Saturday morning helpers, and those that helped with behind-the-scenes tasks: **Joey Ciccia, Pat Deloge, Donna DiLalla** and her friend **Marilyn Poindexter, Jim and Lorraine Finch, Kerry Geffert, Ashley Gomes, Christy LaSalle, Kendra Norman, David and Mary Ann Schiller, Cliff and Mary Schrock, Donna Senft, Edith Skoog,** and **Pastor and Miharuru Wismar** and their sons **Jorge, Kai and Luke.** Last, but not least, **thank you to all those who brought baked goods or fruit salad** for the delicious breakfast buffet.

Another thank you in regard to the Breakfast & Artists is to give gratitude to the artists who took the time and effort to set up their displays: **Doris Bernt and Gail Rivera, Sabine Bonnar and Nicole Ramirez, Ellen Dennerlein, Kristen Messerschmitt, Audrey Paray, Edith Skoog and Megs Skoog.**



CLOTHING DONATIONS

Be a "light" by supporting the Light on the Hill Clothes Closet

The winter season begins this month and the weather has been getting colder. Please donate your gently-used winter clothing and winter coats by putting them in the box in the narthex. We will deliver your clothing to the Summerfield United Methodist Clothes Closet in Bridgeport.

---SOCIAL MINISTRY COMMISSION



General Memorial Fund

In memory of Robert Solaz

Otto and Mary Atkinson
The Bogen Family
Kerry and Karen Geffert
The Rock of Agers Group

WE ARE FAMILY

This column is devoted to family news about Holy Cross members and friends. Please turn in items to the newsletter box.

God's blessings to **Christopher and Erica Carola** upon the Baptism of their son **Maxwell Charles** at the late service on October 30. Maxwell's sponsors are his aunt, Olivia Stotts, and a family friend, Laura Petrie. We welcome Maxwell Charles into the Family of God, through the life-giving waters of Holy Baptism, and look forward to the new relationship we will have with him.



COMFORT DOG MINISTRY

Ministry of comfort and love continues, sparks additional outreach opportunity

Kathryn's ministry is off to a tremendous start. She brings Leah on Fridays to Immanuel Lutheran School to visit the children. She also handled at the Vicki Soto 5K race on November 5!

We continue our work at New Prospects twice a month and our once-a-month visits at HCLC Preschool with Leah. Cindy also visits the residents at Bethel Health Care every Tuesday with Addie.

We have been told that our work is the catalyst for even more good...Where is God leading us?



Recently we received a request from Stamford Outpatient Clinic that provides treatment for individuals with co-occurring substance abuse and mental health issues, with a primary focus on substance abuse. The facility has heard of our work with Network Recovery (New Prospects program) and the effectiveness of the Comfort Dogs with the potential of implementing the use of Comfort Dogs in their Intensive Outpatient Program. Our first step is an in-service workshop. So, what do we do? We are praying and asking our Lord to lead us.

If you feel so moved to help and to learn more, please contact us. We are in need of ministry partners as we go out in teams.

Walking together, SERVING AS ONE,
 ---CINDY CICCIA and KATHRYN STRUZIK

THE MYSTERY OF THE MESSAGE

Where's your security? Linus' gesture gives us the answer

When *A Charlie Brown Christmas* debuted in 1965, religious references were unheard of on television. Yet the show's climax features the Christmas story verbatim. As Linus begins reciting Luke 2, he's clutching his ever-present blue blanket. Yet, as pastor Jason Soroski points out, Linus drops it right as he utters the words "fear not" (Luke 2:10).

Soroski believes the timing is intentional and that "Peanuts" creator Charles M. Schulz sends a simple, brilliant message. "The birth of Jesus separates us from our fears," Soroski writes. It "frees us from the habits we are unable (or unwilling) to break ourselves. The birth of Jesus allows us to simply drop the false security we have been grasping so tightly, and learn to trust and cling to him instead."

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A PRAYER FOR THE SEASON

Amid this sometimes crazy season,
 quiet my heart, Lord.
 Help me find
 Christmas peace and joy in You.



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CHURCH CHUCKLES

