



The HOLY CROSS WORD

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

DECEMBER 2019

"Share the Hope"

VOL. LXIII, NO. 1

FROM OUR INTERIM PASTOR

Dear Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

Greetings in our Lord, Jesus Christ!

Do you find the month of December to be the source of delight or the source of drudgery? There's a fair amount of pressure, sometimes external and often self-imposed, to do what we can to assure that "it's the most wonderful time of the year," but so many people report it to be the period that they find most exhausting. With the reminders coming shortly after Halloween, growing through Thanksgiving, and reaching crescendo by the middle of Advent, the not-so-subtle message is that it's up to us to make it perfect.

Will we ever learn that it's not up to us? Just as God's gracious gifts of life, forgiveness, and salvation are not up to us, neither is the search for the "perfect" Christmas celebration. I invite and encourage you to cut yourself some slack, particularly as you embrace confidently the knowledge that God and God alone has provided, provides now, and shall always provide, by grace, the benefits of Christ's incarnation that we celebrate particularly at Christmas.

The "stuff" in which we engage around the Christmas season can be rather sweet, indeed: the socializing, the gift giving, the special foods, the family traditions, the merry making, the music, and the other delights. And yes, I hope you'll enjoy these things without their becoming undue burdens. Yet I think also of those who are unable – due to age, physical challenges, economic insufficiency, emotional grief, or something else – to engage these things at all. Is the perfect Christmas lost on them? Most certainly it needn't be.

The great gift of God coming to be with and among us – "pitching his tent" among us in the person of Jesus, as some have interpreted the first chapter of John's gospel – is the divine gift freely offered to all without regard to our efforts, abilities, or capacity. All we can do is receive in faith the most marvelous gift of this season and any season.

In Christ Jesus, God has *sanctified* time. He has made it holy, for His coming is not for just a night, but for all time. He comes with a mission, for "*nails, spear, shall pierce him through, The cross be borne for me, for you.*"

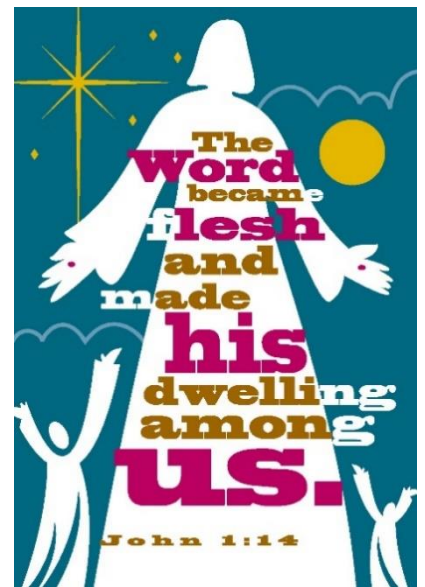
We live and die as persons of Christian faith, beneficiaries of such grace embodied when God took on human flesh in Bethlehem so that He might die outside of Jerusalem.

All this is to say that God took the pressure of the world upon Himself, and we're freed from obsessing on any attempt to add to what God has done. We can't make Christmas perfect for ourselves or anyone else. God has taken care of all things.

So, Merry Christmas! Lighten up and enjoy the holiday, remembering always that Christ among us makes every day a holy day.

Serving with you,

William H. Flammann
Interim Pastor





Sunday, December 1 – The Season of Advent begins

Wednesdays, December 4, 11, 18

- 6:15 p.m. – Advent Soup Suppers
- 7:30 p.m. – Advent Midweek Worship with the theme “Arise and Shine”

Sunday, December 8

- 10:45 a.m. – Decorating the Sanctuary for Christmas *AND*
Gingerbread House-Making Activity

Thursday, December 12

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

Sunday, December 15

- 9:00 a.m. – The Sunday School youth will participate in the Worship service

Friday, December 20

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

Tuesday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

- 6:00 p.m. – Festive Christmas Carol Service
- 11:00 p.m. – Candlelight and Carol Festive Communion

Wednesday, December 25 – The Nativity of Our Lord

- 10:30 a.m. – Christmas Day Holy Communion

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

Sunday, January 26

- 10:30 a.m. – Holy Cross Lutheran Annual Voters’ Meeting
Incliment weather date is Sunday, February 2, at 10:30 a.m.



HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH—LCMS

Sunday Worship Service – 9:00 a.m.

5995 Main Street, Trumbull, CT 06611

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

Church Office: 203-268-4555; **Church Office e-mail:** office@holycrosstrumbull.com

Website: www.holycrosstrumbull.org

Christian Preschool: 203-268-6471 **e-mail:** preschool@holycrosstrumbull.com

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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.



THE REASON FOR REJOICING
Significant words from Martin Luther

“That the Creator Himself comes to us and becomes our ransom – this is the reason for our rejoicing.”

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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 Tuesday 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.



PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL

Advent

Last month's journal entry focused on the suggestion of bringing stillness into our busy lives and minds. I choose to remain optimistic that stillness has been incorporated into your daily practices and meditations, especially now that Advent is upon us. This month's entry is on Advent, the season of anticipation.

The first known use of the term "Advent" with a capital "A" is from the 12th century, defining the timespan of the four Sundays before Christmas. The word goes back to Latin through Middle English and Medieval Latin, via a variant of *ad venire*, meaning to arrive or to come.⁽¹⁾ What does Advent mean to us as Christians and where are we looking for the markers to navigate this time of anticipation? I enjoyed reading excerpts from this site which provides a history of Advent, some commentary on Martin Luther, and Lutheran tradition in particular: <https://lutheranreformation.org/get-involved/lutheran-advent-traditions/>. I strive to live dynamically in my faith, anticipating the Light of the World, Jesus Christ, to take on human form to be our Savior. I look to the lighting of our Advent wreath, our hymns, our Scripture readings, our Christian fellowship during soup suppers and vesper services, and preparation of Christmas decorations and gifts. I seek joy in anticipating a great gift in the form of the little baby Jesus who brings renewal and salvation to all of us who believe. It is a gift and a blessing to live with joy and to share it with those around us.

Then there is this: We have so much to do, and now there are the expectations of Christmas with family and friends and stress and gifts and preparation and cleaning and that "one more thing" to our overloaded days. That is exhausting; so I think about this: The overload is part of the season and reminds us of the chaos in our spiritual lives before the saving grace of Christmas. So no easy answers here. Recognize this season of anticipation for what it is and use it to focus on what is important. While we may anticipate spilled gravy boats and wine stains on our good table linens, we may more importantly anticipate the coming of the Light which shines on us, not our stains. All will be merry and bright, even as we struggle with time constraints, family discord and grief for those who have passed. I live these things and speak the truth about what I have learned. The sheer power of this grace brings me to tears. I hope you find joy and peace; I hope to see you at our soup suppers and vespers; I hope you are renewed during this Christmas season and the coming new year.

In Christ's service,
 ---MICHELE VAN WART, President
 Board of Directors
 Holy Cross Lutheran Church

¹: Merriam Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/> (11/2/19)



DECK THE HALLS

Join us on December 8 for decorating our sanctuary and singing some carols

On Sunday, December 8, we invite you to help decorate our church sanctuary for the Christmas season and take part in a carol sing. We will begin around 10:45 a.m. You're invited to sing along as our tree, ornaments, lights and beautiful Nativity scene adorn the house of the Lord. This will be followed by a light lunch for all helpers, sponsored by the Worship Commission. Extra helping hands are always appreciated. Please sign up so we know how much lunch to provide!

---SALLY FINCK and DORIS DIETMAN
 for the Worship Commission



"Once in our world, a stable had something in it
 that was bigger than our whole world."

—C.S. Lewis



Advent begins on Sunday, December 1

**“Arise, shine, for your
light has come.”**

— Isaiah 60:1



Our Midweek Advent Preparation—“Arise and Shine”

This Advent we prepare for and focus on the Christ Child who is the Light of the world. Each week's service will illustrate a different way in which we are enlightened by Jesus now and throughout our lives. We will be encouraged through God's Word and our hymns how we may shine with the Light of Christ for those around us to see the brightness of His love. Worship with us and receive assurance that Christ is your Light – and then take that Light and reflect it in your daily life.

Wednesdays, Dec. 4, 11, 18

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

LEND YOUR VOICE

Holy Cross choir members needed

Love to sing? Choir is looking for at least one more tenor and a bass/baritone. More ladies welcome too! Join us on Mondays at 7:30 p.m. or on Sundays just after 10:30 a.m. See Ms. Finck for more info; no audition or music reading required.

---SALLY FINCK

Music Director



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

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 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. 4

Dec. 11

Dec. 18

Suppers at 6:15 p.m.



Holden Evening Prayer
at 7:30 p.m.

Our theme this year is
"Arise and Shine"

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.

HOLY CROSS CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

Activities this month center 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 20.



Registration for the 2020-2021 school year will begin on January 13. 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

COVENANT TO CARE FOR CHILDREN

Gifts, winter hat & mitten/glove sets due – unwrapped – by Dec. 11

Thank you for your loving Christmas spirit!! This spirit was seen in action both before and after the Worship service on November 17 as Holy Cross members and friends gathered around the "Giving Tree" poster in the narthex to select an ornament tag, each having the name of a child that is in the caseload of our "adopted" DCF social worker, Mimose Ulysse-Laurenard. Despite being on maternity leave, Mimose has 19 children in her caseload between the ages of 5 and 17; many of these children are in their tweens or teens. Mimose's caseload is currently being supervised and split between two of her co-workers. In speaking with one of them, she told me that so many of these children come from troubled backgrounds and need a good outlet for expressing themselves; thus, many of the girls want art and craft items, and again this year, the older teenage girls wished for make-



up and nail polish. As a mom of a former youth basketball player it warmed my heart to find out that a few of the boys wanted their own basketballs for taking to the gym or outdoor court. All these things are so simple and will make a young person's Christmas brighter!! In addition to the special item that each child wishes for, each child will be given a winter hat and mitten/glove set; these have been donated throughout the year after sales last February/March and again over the past few weeks.

There were just about 25 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 Wednesday, Dec. 11.

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

BREAKFAST & ARTISTS RECAP

Return of our church's fall community event is a major success

A wonderful morning was had by all who attended our Breakfast & Artists event on Saturday, November 2. The nearly 70 guests in attendance enjoyed shopping for a variety of different items from 10 vendors, including many from our own congregation. There was photography by Jim Atkinson, paintings by Sabine Bonnar, knitting by Doris Bernt and Gail Rivera, and handmade crafts and snacks by Laurie Vaitkus. Edith Skoog had her delicious homemade breads and coffee cakes, Megs Skoog had a table filled with homemade honey, Audrey Paray had beautiful vintage jewelry, Helen Rosselli had a table of homemade cards and scrapbook pages, and Rachel Fraulo had beaded earrings and bracelets.

After a bit of shopping, guests were treated to a delicious, warm breakfast buffet. Cindy and Joe Ciccio and Lorraine and Jim Finch cooked and served scrambled eggs, sausage, hash browns, oatmeal, fruit salad and pastries. Coffee, tea, and juice were also served. During breakfast, the crowd heard some beautiful piano music played by our Music Director Sally Finck. We were also fortunate to have Mary Schrock and Dave Bogen sing and play on their guitars a wonderful John Denver song entitled "Rhymes and Reasons."



Our guest speaker this year, Kellyann Day, captivated the crowd with her Power Point presentation about the mission of New Reach. New Reach is an organization that inspires independence for those affected by homelessness and poverty in Connecticut. She spoke about the different services offered within New Reach, as well as shared a few personal stories about individuals she has helped overcome poverty. Ms. Day was very grateful for the donations that our Breakfast & Artists guests brought with them, including toiletries, towels, blankets, sheets and cleaning supplies. A collection box was available for those that were moved to make a direct monetary donation to New Reach.

"B & A recap," continues on page 7



All who attended the Breakfast & Artists event were certainly captivated by our guest speaker, Kellyann Day from New Reach (top photo). But before Kellyann's presentation everyone enjoyed a wonderful breakfast buffet served with smiles and love by a few Holy Cross members...that's Michele Van Wart and Alexis Rodriguez serving guests. At right, from left to right, are Cindy Ciccio, Stephanie Helminger, Kendra Norman and Lorraine Finch. Cindy and Lorraine, along with their husbands Joe and Jim, were the awesome chefs who served up such a great breakfast.



“B & A recap,” continues from Page 6

Through ticket sales, artist contributions, and a free-will collection, more than \$1,000 was raised at Breakfast & Artists 2019. After taking care of any expenses left over from the event, all proceeds will be donated directly to New Reach. We would like to thank everyone for their generosity!

Our 2019 Breakfast & Artists event would not have been possible without the numerous volunteers that helped make this year’s program a success. Be sure to look for their names in the Thank You column on the next page.

---STEPHANIE HELMINGER & KENDRA NORMAN
Social Ministry Co-Chairs



Pastries, pastries, who wants a pastry?!
There sure were plenty of these goodies to top off the eggs, sausage and fruit salad!
At top right, Edith Skoog shows her table of “art”—homemade breads—and by the end of the event Edith had sold out! As you can see in the picture to the right, our Fellowship Hall was full. Great food, wonderful fellowship and an inspirational speaker combined for a memorable event.



SHARE YOUR MUSICAL TALENTS

Play a musical piece as an Advent service prelude

Advent is a great time to share your musical gifts! If you play piano or another instrument, come play a song or two before the service! A “Preludes” sign-up sheet is in the narthex or just e-mail me at:

musicdirector@holycrosstrumbull.com.

---SALLY FINCK
Music Director



MEMORIAL GIFTS

General Memorial Fund

In memory of Billie Skoog

Ryan and Christina (Batoh) Jennings & Clara

Dieter and Ingrid Leibold

John Rosen

Share the Hope Fund

In memory of Billie Skoog

The Rock of Agers Group

THANKS A BUNCH!

Do you know of someone who did something special as a volunteer here at Holy Cross? This column is the spot to identify him or her! If you have an item to include in this monthly “thank you” column – to recognize the gifts of time and talent that someone provided to do God’s work in our church and community – please jot it down and put it in the “newsletter” mailbox. This month we say “thank you” to:

Jim and Lorraine Finch for taking the food and clothing donations from the narthex to Sterling House Food Pantry and Summerfield United Methodist Clothes Closet, respectively.

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 in the church office with various tasks one morning a week. They are the “bulletin angels” but help out with more than folding and collating the Sunday worship folders!

Stephanie Helminger, Kendra Norman and Lorraine Finch for making sure the narthex display case has been updated during the fall months – promoting the Breakfast & Artists event or highlighting the Thanksgiving holiday.

Stephanie Helminger and Kendra Norman for coordinating the 2019 Breakfast & Artists event. But Stephanie and Kendra know that this event on Nov. 2 would not have been possible without the help of a tremendous group of volunteers. Thank you to **Donna and Dave Bogen, Cindy and Joe Ciccio, Lorraine and Jim Finch, Sally Finck, Pastor Flammann, Kerry Geffert, Gary Messerschmitt, Alexis Rodriguez, Mary Ann and Dave Schiller, Mary Schrock, Laurie Vaitkus and Michele Van Wart.** We also give thanks to the artists: **Jim Atkinson, Doris Bernt, Sabine Bonnar, Rachel Fraulo, Tricia Jeffries, Audrey Paray, Gail Rivera, Helen Rosselli, Edith Skoog, Megs Skoog and Laurie and Joey Vaitkus.** Finally, we can’t forget to thank **all those who brought food donations** of fruit salads and baked goods.



ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Covering all stages of life with aplomb

The local news station was interviewing an 80-year-old lady because she had just gotten married for the fourth time. The interviewer asked her questions about her life, about what it felt like to be marrying again at 80, and then about her new husband’s occupation. “He’s a funeral director,” she answered.

“Interesting,” the newsman thought. He then asked her if she wouldn’t mind telling him a little about her first three husbands and what they did for a living.

She paused for a few moments, needing time to reflect on all those years. After a short time, a smile came to her face and she answered proudly, explaining that she had first married a banker when she was in her 20’s, then a circus ringmaster when in her 40’s, and a preacher when in her 60’s, and now – in her 80’s – a funeral director.

The interviewer looked at her, quite astonished, and asked why she had married four men with such diverse careers.

She replied, “I married one for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, and four to go.”



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

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN ANNUAL VOTERS’ MEETING

**Sunday, January 26, immediately following
the Worship service (approx. 10:30 a.m.)**

(Inclement weather date: Sunday, February 2, at 10:30 a.m.)



CELEBRATING DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



DEC. 2: RILEY RICCIO
 DEC. 3: AUDREY PARAY
 DEC. 5: CHRISTY HALLS
 DEC. 7: JIM FINCH
 DEC. 8: PATSY CERONE, JR.
 ROBERTA CROCKER

DEC. 10: JOANNE BOGEN
 ZACHARY WENDLING
 DEC. 12: COLE DOWLING
 JORDAN MATTHEWS
 DEC. 13: SARAH BOGEN
 DEC. 27: MANFRED SCHLAICH
 DEC. 31: EFFIE SOLAZ

SPIRITUAL POWER

Jesus is our solid foundation

As he neared death, the atheistic philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre tried – but failed – to resist despair. “I know I shall die in hope,” he wrote. “But that hope needs a foundation.”

For Christians, that foundation is Jesus, our sure hope amid life’s uncertainties. While Advent is a time of anticipation and waiting, it also represents the fulfillment of Jesus’ promised birth and the certainty of His promised return. Jesus – the hope of nations – says He’s preparing a place for us and coming back for us (see John 14:2-3).

Jesus is our sure
HOPE

Because our hope’s foundation is guaranteed “according to the Lord’s word” (1 Thessalonians 4:15, NIV), we don’t have to live like people “who have no hope” (verse 13). Praise God!!

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CHURCH CHUCKLES



Christmas Worship Schedule

Joy

Christmas Eve at 6:00 p.m. —
 Festive Christmas Carol Service

Christmas Eve at 11:00 p.m. —
 Candlelight and Carol Festive Communion

Christmas Day at 10:30 a.m. —
 Christmas Day-Holy Communion

