

THE CROSSWORD

January 2024

A PUBLICATION OF HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

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EVERY MEMBER MATTERS

from Pastor Nathan Erb

In the early 1960s, John F. Kennedy visited the space center at Cape Canaveral to see how the United States was doing in the space race against the Soviet Union. Legend has it that Kennedy was able to get away from the press and walk down a hallway, where he saw a man carrying a mop and bucket. The president inquired about what the man was doing. The custodian replied, “I am helping put a man on the moon.”

Was this man delusional, making a lighthearted joke, or was he serious? It might have been the second, and I doubt it was the first, but I also hope it was the last. But, you may ask, how do sweeping floors, taking out the trash, and dusting off desks compare to solving complicated equations and making technological advances? It’s true—the work itself isn’t the same, but that’s not what matters. What matters is the mission! This janitor saw his job as an essential part of a team effort to “put a man on the moon.”

With every bag of trash emptied and workspace cleaned, he was doing his job so that others could do their jobs!

Let me repeat that. The janitor was doing his job, so other’s could do theirs.

Who is more important on the basketball team? The one who scores 60 points in a game, or the one who scores two? Or, for that matter, the equipment manager?

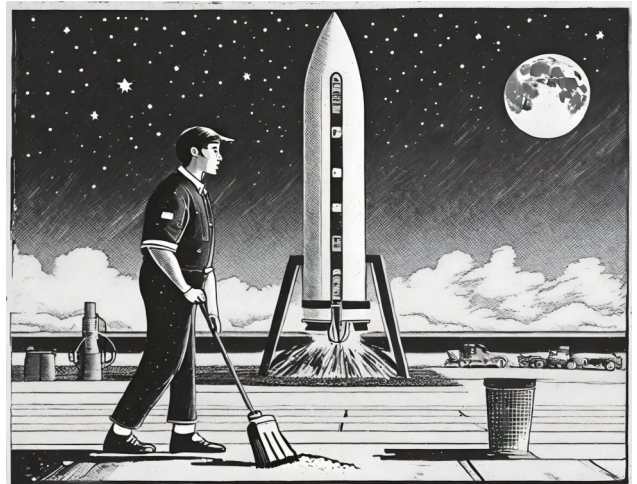
Who is more important in the play, the one who has 90% of the lines or the person who has one line? Or, for that matter, the stage crew?

Take a moment to consider that.

Most people would assume that the star is the most important. He is the one who people come to see. She is the one who keeps things interesting! But who does that person believe is important to their success?

Consider another example. As I write this, the Golden Globe Awards are right around the corner. Each year, a new star emerges and receives recognition for the work that

they did. And each winner will give a speech, most likely listing a bunch of names you may also recognize. But they will also list a slew of names you don’t know. Family members, friends, cast, and crew—many others who will never become



household names, and yet the award winner deemed them important enough to thank—on one of the world’s biggest stages. They realize (hopefully) that their visible achievement would not be possible without the invisible work of those behind the scenes. And yet, their work isn’t

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PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL

from Kerry Geffert

Well, here we are again – at the beginning of another year. A time to take stock, become organized and generally set our direction for the next 12 months. We do this at Holy Cross, too, although we call it our Annual Voters' Meeting. This year will be no different. Weather permitting, we will gather on the last Sunday of January for our annual ritual.

I heard that groan! But lest you think differently, you are not alone. Does anyone really look forward to an Annual Voters' Meeting (AVM)? We have had meetings that were contentious and dragged on far longer than anyone wanted. And we've had meetings where you left wondering why you attended. We often have spent more time talking about the past, then rushing through budget proposals due primarily to meeting fatigue. Talk about the future came in hastily delivered remarks by the President and/or Pastor before attendees bolted out the door.

Will you help me change this cycle for 2024? Last January you set Holy Cross on a new organizational path by approving major changes to our By Laws. I will tell you that the implementation of those changes has not been as smooth as I hoped; we still have much work to do. Now add to that mix the leadership and financial realities we are encountering.

But I'd rather not spend our AVM wringing hands over the past. Instead, let's look forward and consider how we will turn our challenges into opportunities. Let's strive to answer a few questions:

- What should Holy Cross look like on December 31, 2024?
- What behaviors are necessary to achieve those desired outcomes?
- Who among us can be tapped to help achieve those outcomes?

Notice any missing questions? I didn't ask how we'll make things happen. That's the responsibility of your

Board of Directors (of course, with your input) and appropriate Ministry Teams.

And the other missing question – how will we pay for it (whatever "it" is)? Sure we must be realistic, but we must also have faith. That said, there is a cautionary note. If we choose to continue with our current status quo of member and financial engagement, be prepared to make some difficult decisions at our AVM.

WE MUST BE
REALISTIC,
BUT WE
MUST ALSO
HAVE FAITH.

In my many years of leadership at Holy Cross, I believe this year's annual meeting to be one of the most important we have had in many years (except for call decisions). That means attendance is vitally important. Remember my theme from last month? PRIORITIES. If the

Annual Voters' Meeting of the congregation of which you are a member is not a high enough priority, then don't be surprised when you are challenged to explain the extent to which you are making Holy Cross membership a priority in 2024. +



Save the date

**ANNUAL VOTERS
MEETING**



HOLY CROSS

LUTHERAN CHURCH & PRESCHOOL

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Sunday Worship | 9:30 a.m.

Sunday School & Bible Class | 10:45 a.m.

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THE CROSSWORD

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EVERY MEMBER MATTERS

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invisible—it was seen, appreciated, and essential to the one to whom it mattered. The award goes to one person, but every person behind them matters. They all played a role—no matter how big or small—to accomplish the mission. This goes for team members who don’t get much play time, for background actors, and for janitors at NASA.

And the same is true in the church.

Everyone has a role to play. Every member matters. And what you do and who you are are not invisible. It is seen, appreciated, and necessary to the one to whom it matters. God has brought you into this congregation for a purpose. It may be visible or it may be behind the scenes—but it matters. You matter!

In 2024, we are going to explore in depth what it means to be “Together in Christ” and how every single person who walks through our doors is an essential part of the body of Christ. We will ask the question, “What would it look like if we truly believed and acted as if every member mattered?”

In fact, take some time right now to think about that question and how you might answer it in light of our congregation. What types of ministries and programs would we

have? How would people know they mattered? How would it benefit our collective mission of sharing the gospel with our community?

I can not wait to keep asking questions and finding the answers that will make our church a lov-

ing place where everyone knows they are cared for by both God and each other. Who knows? Maybe one day we’ll do something even greater than putting a man on the moon! +

GOD HAS BROUGHT YOU INTO THIS CONGREGATION FOR A PURPOSE. IT MAY BE VISIBLE OR IT MAY BE BEHIND THE SCENES—BUT IT MATTERS. YOU MATTER!

Pastor Nathan Erb



BUILDING BLOCKS

from Holy Cross Christian Preschool

Happy New Year! After more than a week off for the holidays we are getting back into the school routine. In January we will be exploring the season of winter. We will have an in-depth study of animals in the winter and how they survive. We will learn which animals migrate, which ones hibernate or if they stay in the usual habitat. The children will discover what makes snow as well as the process of freezing and melting. We are also teaching the children the correct way of writing the letters of the alphabet. We use the “Fundation” writing program that makes it fun and simple.

Our Bible stories will include the story of Jesus as a young boy and then move on to how Jesus helps and heals us. We will learn how Jesus heals a blind man and feeds the 5000, as well as the parables of the Lost

Son and the Good Samaritan. These stories help to show the children the love and mercy of our amazing Savior!

Registration for the 2024-2025 school year will begin January 22. Please recommend us to your family and friends! To schedule a visit or find out more information about our school, please contact Michele Glennon at preschool@holycrosstrumbull.com or by phoning 203-268-6471.

WE'RE ON FACEBOOK!

Check out our school's Facebook page to see pictures and descriptions of all our exciting activities!

www.facebook.com/

[HolyCrossPreschoolTrumbull/](https://www.facebook.com/HolyCrossPreschoolTrumbull/)



PANCAKE DAY

Save the date!

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 11:00AM

Piles and piles of pancakes—of every kind! That's what's in store as you enjoy a delicious, and meaningful, pancake brunch to begin the Lenten Season.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW, SO YOU
CAN JOIN US!**

Celebrating this Month

JANUARY

It's fun to be recognized on your special day! Even more so, it's special to know others are praying for you. It is our hope that as you spend time in daily prayer, you will remember your fellow Holy Cross members on their special day.

BIRTHDAYS

Date Name

2 Lucy Kravecs
6 Cheryl Conte
12 Caroline Hron Weigle
12 Charlie Hron Weigle
12 William Malmstedt
16 Susan Antoniou
16 Lauren Gagliardi
17 Emily Struzik
23 Sydney Fitzmorris
25 Brandon Matthews
27 Ron Sjoblom
29 Emily Hron Weigle
30 Karen Geffert

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Date Name

6 Michael & Amanda Weldon
25 Andrew & Lydia Struzik

BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS

John Anantharaj
Joanne Bogen
Ingrid Cerone
Kristen Cerone
Patsy Cerone
Keith Chirgwin
Roberta Crocker
Audrey Gomes
Kaiden Gomes
Michael Halls
Bret Helminger
Buela John
Sheryl John
Peggy Liptack
Ryan Matthews
Kendra Norman
Marissa Rodriguez
Cliff Schrock
Laurie Vaitkus

If there is someone that should be on one of these lists, but isn't...please alert the office so we can update our records!