



The **HOLY CROSS WORD**

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

MAY 2021

"Share the Hope"

VOL. LXIV, NO. 6

FROM OUR VACANCY PASTOR

To Confirm or to Conform – That is the question!

On May 2, three young men will participate in the Rite of Confirmation during the worship service – Gavin Dowling, Nate Helminger and Shane John. They have been meeting with me each Wednesday since mid-September via Zoom sessions as we worked through the basics of the Christian faith as explained in Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism.

For these young men, there has been a high degree of anticipation. But as an older member, think back – what do you remember of your confirmation?

For those of us who were confirmed as early teens (8th grade?), those memories may have dimmed. Ladies probably remember what dress they wore while men may recall how awkward they felt in a suit and tie. We felt both uncomfortable yet pleased that we were, at least for a few minutes, the center of attention. A few of us may still remember our Confirmation Bible verse and the gift provided from the church.

Even though I've had the privilege of teaching students through the years, one consistent confusion has frequently occurred – between "confirmation" and "conformation". Is there much of a difference?

"To conform" is to behave according to socially acceptable conventions or standards. "To confirm" is to state with assurance that something is true or to reinforce a certain belief.

Although only one letter is different in each word, their meanings are certainly not the same. The intent of this Lutheran rite is not to conform or mold individuals into a singular format. It's not a cookie-cutter process, even though some religious groups come close. In fact, St. Paul uses the word "conform" in a negative sense when he writes, "*Do not be conformed to this world...*" – *Romans 12:2*.

When these young men participate in the Rite of Confirmation, they will affirm their Baptismal faith. They will be saying in effect, that they believe that from their Baptism, they have been children of God – created by a loving Father, redeemed through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and empowered by God's Spirit to live a life pleasing to God and beneficial to their fellow man.

Although their confession of faith may be similar, the application of their faith will be different – because God made each of them different. Just as every child in a family is related, each is also distinctively unique from the others because that's the way God made us. It has been God's plan to equip His children with "gifts" that differ – "gifts" that are to be used as God intended. St. Paul writes extensively about this in 1 Corinthians 12:1-27!

That is why Holy Cross is so rich! It embodies as many God-given "gifts" as there are members. And whenever these "gifts" are employed for the service of His Kingdom, amazing things result.

On May 2, three young men will identify with this fellowship. By remembering our Confirmation, we can renew our commitment to our Lord and to the ministries He empowers.

---BILL MEYER
Vacancy Pastor





Sunday, May 2

10:00 a.m. – Worship Service, with Confirmation of our 8th-Grade youth

Sunday, May 9 – Mother's Day

Thursday, May 13 – The Ascension of Our Lord

7:00 p.m. – Board of Directors' online meeting

Saturday, May 22

10:00 a.m. – Congregational Meeting via Zoom
(Details sent via e-mail; USPS for those without e-mail)

Sunday, May 23 – The Day of Pentecost—Wear Red to Worship!

Monday, May 31 – Memorial Day

(OFFICE CLOSED; NO PRESCHOOL)



HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH—LCMS

Sunday Worship Service: 10:00 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 (Matt. 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).



Like Holy Cross on Facebook!

After you "Like" us, you'll see postings of upcoming events, pictures from events and other notices.



CELEBRATING MOMS

Author unknown, but certainly does know mom knows best!

"If at first you don't succeed, try doing it the way mom told you to in the beginning."

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NEWSLETTER NOTES

Our next deadline is...

The next issue of The Holy Cross Word is the June edition. The deadline for articles is Saturday, May 15.

Please plan ahead to publicize events or share news with your fellow Holy Cross members.

You can submit articles to the newsletter mailbox (outside the church office), or send them via e-mail to:

office@holycrosstrumbull.com.



A UNIQUE WAY TO CELEBRATE MOMS

Special gift for moms to be given out on Mother's Day

To celebrate Mother's Day on Sunday, May 9, the Discipleship Commission will be presenting Moms with Teacup Bird Feeders to take home. The bird feeders will be placed in the narthex for your choosing. Small bags of birdseed and boxes will be included. Feel free to take one for your Mom if she isn't present. There will be plenty for everyone!

---ADELE BUCK and KATHY BOIVIE



HOLY CROSS CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

Children excited to receive caterpillars and watch their transformation to butterflies

The children have been busy learning about the many different animals that God has created. In May we will explore pond, rainforest and ocean animals. We will learn about habitats, life cycles and what these animals need to survive.

You may remember from my April newsletter article that we helped the children to plant bean and pumpkin seeds. This month we will take note every day of the growth of these vegetables. Our bean plants are getting so tall!

Once again this year we received a delivery of caterpillars. On a daily basis we will eagerly observe and document our caterpillars as they become butterflies. We can't wait until they emerge as beautiful butterflies!



Our Bible stories will focus on the work of the disciples after Jesus' ascension to heaven. We rejoice in the knowledge of His promise to be with us always!

We currently have openings in all our classes for next year and our summer camp sessions are close to being filled! Praise God! Don't forget to check out our school's Facebook page @HolyCrossPreschoolTrumbull to see pictures of all our exciting daily activities!

In Jesus' Name,
---MICHELE GLENNON
Preschool Director

CALLING ALL GRADUATES

Details about your graduation and future plans needed by June 11

Hopefully Graduation 2021 will be a bit more "back-to-normal" for our youth. Even so, this year college visits and job searches have been both in-person and online, and graduation ceremonies will have mask-wearing and physical distancing rules in place. But we know our graduates and their families will make the best of the current situation!

To go along with that, we want to share your good news, so if you are graduating from high school, college or a Master's program this spring, we encourage you to share the details about this exciting milestone with your church family. We plan to recognize all of our graduates in the July/August newsletter. Graduate Information forms are on the narthex table, or can be obtained either in paper or electronic form by contacting Mary in the church office: office@holycrosstrumbull.com. We ask that all information is given to the church office by Friday, June 11. Please let us know who you are – you are important to us!



LEARN FROM & BE INSPIRED BY SCRIPTURE

The Holy Cross Word monthly “Bible study on paper”: Acts, Chapter 2

Editor’s note: *To do this study, you will need to open your own Bible in front of you, of whatever version you prefer, or you can go to a website such as BibleGateway.com, and enter the Bible version you prefer and this Bible passage Acts 2 in the appropriate search fields.*



Acts, Chapter 2, 47 verses—Of the Biblical stories just below the most familiar events such as Jesus’ birth and resurrection and the creation accounts are two of my favorite narratives: the Road to Emmaus and the narrative we will focus on this month, Pentecost and the arrival of the Holy Spirit. (The illustration with this column is the center portion of a 124-foot wide by 20-foot tall mural by Torger Thompson called “The Miracle at Pentecost,” which was the centerpiece of the Biblical Arts Center in Dallas before being destroyed in a fire in 2005. I had seen it in person; on the half hour, the mural was unveiled accompanied by a sound and light show. If you can’t see it well on the paper copy, “Google” it and you are sure to come up with a good version online.)

Having just described the selection of a new apostle to end Chapter 1, Luke now provides us with one of the church’s most inspiring events with the arrival of the Spirit, the “helper” Jesus foretold. Before we proceed, open your Bible or web page to Acts, Chapter 2, and read the full chapter.

Chapter analysis—

Okay, welcome back. We know the purpose of Acts is to show how Christ started the church and how its early growth occurred. The coming of the Holy Spirit was a critical jumping off point for that growth since we know the Spirit moves us to action and to respond to God’s call. The chapter starts with a description that on the Day of Pentecost, the 50th day after Passover, the apostles were grouped together at a morning time we refer to nowadays as the start of the workday. We are told only that it’s a “place” but also a house; some accounts say they met in an “upper room.” Whatever the locale, there must have been a public nature to it because of what happens next in this miracle. The elements of wind and fire are the key “players.” As seems to happen most often, heaven is the origin of the sequence of events. A noise that sounded like wind came down upon the house. Interestingly, it is described that noise filled the house, not necessarily the wind itself. That may help explain why the flames or tongues of fire that followed, hovering over the apostles’ heads, were not extinguished. That the heat of the fire did not harm them is reminiscent of the burning bush that Moses saw when God spoke to him; the fire did not consume the bush and neither did the Holy Spirit’s fire scorch the disciples. What did happen was what we know fire does: it ignites. And these “tongues” of fire worked on the disciples’ speaking ability. They were filled with the Spirit’s fire and as a result they were inspired to speak languages they had not spoken before.



How much time these events took is not clear, but it developed over enough time that Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem from every known country in the world for Passover were attracted by the noise and came to see what was happening. The disciples’ verbal phenomenon amazed the leaders, who were able to pick out their language being spoken amidst the cacophony of noise. The disciples were witnessing with remarks about God and His wonderful deeds, and soon the leaders went from astonishment to questioning what in the world was going on and what did it all mean. Some, however, chose to express derision and ridicule the disciples for being drunk.

But Peter, showing a courage he had lacked on the night of Jesus’ betrayal and during His trial, gave one of Christianity’s greatest speeches to refute any drunkenness at that time of the morning and explain that what just happened fulfilled the prophecy of Joel about the Spirit inhabiting all kinds of people and allowing them to do great things. Peter follows that bold declaration with a stern reprimand of what had happened to Jesus, who had performed miracles and who had been a conduit for signs from God, but despite His clear special nature, the Jews had killed him. God knew this would happen, Peter says. It had been His plan from long ago, as was Jesus being raised from the dead and being set free from the grave.

Peter explains through quoting Scripture that David was referring to Jesus when he wrote Psalm 16. Peter specifically says the phrase “He was not left in the grave. His body did not rot” that David knew Christ would come from David’s lineage and become a king, descended from David the King.

“Acts Chapter 2 Bible Study,” continues on page 5

“Acts Chapter 2 Bible Study,” continues from page 4

This speech of witnessing allows Peter to clearly let people know what happened after Jesus’ death, that He had risen and ascended to be at God’s side, and now the Spirit has come as Jesus predicted. This brings Peter’s sermon full circle so he can say God’s plan has been fulfilled with the events of the morning. Peter says to the people that they had Jesus, Lord and Christ, in their midst but they nailed him to the cross.

**“This Jesus
God raised up,
and of that all
of us are
witnesses.”**
Acts 2:32, NRSV

In verse 37 we read how those present took this news to heart and had remorse and even asked Peter what they could do about it. He then is able to provide one of the church’s early dialogues on the law-and-gospel approach Christianity teaches. He gives them the Good News: change your hearts and lives, be baptized in the name of Jesus, so your sins can be forgiven. The Holy Spirit will come to you and your children and all who call upon God.

In a critical example, in verses 40 to 42, Peter showed how witnessing requires diligence. I am reminded of watching the Billy Graham crusades on TV when he would provide similar urging to have those hearing his voice save themselves from the evil this world presents. In the Acts account, thousands of people were moved at that time; 3,000, we’re told, came forward and were baptized. The Holy Spirit was clearly at work, inspiring the baptized to inquire more of the apostles about what they knew. They prayed together and broke bread, which could either be similar to the special meal Jesus had at the Last Supper or a simple meal.

Chapter 2 concludes with a description of what this hearty new band of believers did. They showed great respect for God, they supported each other, they sold land and possessions and used the money to help the needy, they met in the temple every day and also gathered in their homes to share meals. Their hearts were joyful and happy, and their nature paid dividends by attracting more and more believers every day so that the group of believers continued to grow. The Christian church was forming at a great rate, which is why this Day of Pentecost is referred to as the birthday of the church.

Sources: Harper Study Bible; The Everyday Bible: New Testament.

Next month: Acts, Chapter 3.

---CLIFF SCHROCK

A THOUGHT ABOUT LOVING OTHERS

Simple gestures make substantial impact in showing we care

During a conversation over coffee, a friend mentioned an “EGR.” I had to interrupt and ask for a definition: Extra Grace Required — in other words, people who can seem tough to love. Often, they’re the most in *need* of love because they’re hurting. Perhaps Jesus was referring to EGRs when he said, “If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much” (Matthew 5:46, NLT).

Truly loving others — even EGRs — might not be as tough as we think. Simple gestures such as smiling, truly listening, sending a note or extending an invitation go a long way toward expressing care and softening hearts.

At times, we all require extra grace. Thankfully, God has an unlimited amount to extend *to* us and then *through* us. Out of joy, we can find ways — even simple ones — to share God’s grace and love with people who need it.

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THE DAY OF PENTECOST IS SUNDAY, MAY 23...WEAR RED!



**“Before Pentecost the disciples found it hard to do easy things;
after Pentecost they found it easy to do hard things.”**



(Words by A.J. Gordon; reprinted with permission from The Newsletter Newsletter, Copyright © 2018)

FINANCIAL NOTES

Offering update provided for the first three months of 2021

As part of our ongoing communication efforts, we are pleased to provide you with this quarterly financial update for the first quarter (through March 2021).

The weekly envelope giving totaled \$61,837 through the end of March. This is less than the budget amount of \$67,000 but has increased each month. As we continue our journey to more “normal” services, your ongoing support is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your generosity!

A few other items to highlight:

- We have a small net deficit through the first quarter of the year of \$(875).
 - Total income is slightly less than budget which is fairly positive given the continued challenges of Covid. This includes \$7,009 of special Share the Hope offerings that will be used for major maintenance projects for our church and parsonage.
 - The Board and our staff continue to be diligent in managing expenses wherever possible. Despite significant costs for snow plowing, our total costs are under budget.
- Remember that Vanco can be a very convenient option for online giving. There are two ways to give: Via the website or via the “Give Plus” app that can be downloaded from the app store. Both are very straightforward and additional fund options have been added for your convenience.

The Board hopes you find this update valuable, and we thank you for your continued support. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Monthly Giving – January to March 2021

Month	Offering Actual	Offering Budget
January	\$18,113	\$21,000
February	20,122	21,000
March	23,602	25,000
Total	\$61,837	\$67,000

Income Statement – January to March 2021

	Actual	Budget
Total Income*	\$72,097	\$76,948
Total Expenses	<u>(72,972)</u>	<u>(77,439)</u>
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ (875)	\$ (491)

* Total income includes weekly giving/offering, plate, building use, special services and investment income

--CHAD HELMINGER
Financial Secretary



“And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.”

–2 Corinthians 9:8

SAVE THE DATE

Please join us for a **Special Congregational Meeting** on **Saturday, May 22, at 10:00 a.m.**—to be held virtually.

The Zoom link is: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/89117578532>.

If needed, the dial-in number is: +1 (929) 205-6099,

Passcode: 89117578532#. This is a very important meeting.

Two qualified pastoral candidates will be presented and a vote done online (or by phone as needed) to call one of them to be our next full-time pastor. Please keep this process in prayer.

Additional details have been sent in the meeting notice letter (by e-mail and as needed, USPS.)

Call Sherry Duff (203-482-4525) with any questions.



CELEBRATING MAY BIRTHDAYS

May 1: Daniel Schipul

May 5: Mary Atkinson

Nancy Dolan

May 6: Carol Burns

May 9: Jim Leslie

Ursula Naumann

May 10: Donna Jackson

Lia Veteri

May 12: Edna Karacsony

May 13: Nicole Ciccio



May 20: Diane Dietman

Josh Wilson

May 23: Dieter Leibold

May 24: Lisa Bailey

Cliff Schrock

May 26: Kerry Geffert

May 28: Buela John

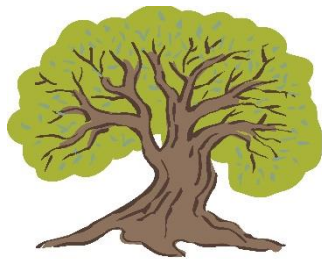
May 29: Maura Senft

May 31: Blake Deloge

THOUGHTS ABOUT TREES...AND US

It's the season of spring...aspire to be like a tree!

Have deep roots,
branch out,
be flexible,
keep growing on the inside,
bloom often,
show your colors,
point your trunk upward,
raise your limbs to heaven,
and bring forth good fruit, as long as you live.



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CHURCH CHUCKLES

