



The **HOLY CROSS WORD**

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

NOVEMBER 2021

"Share the Hope"

VOL. LXIV, NO. 12

HEAD TO THE HEART

Baptism is like an onion

In an attempt to explain why he is the way he is to his new companion Donkey, Shrek explains that "Ogres are like onions – they have many layers." And we can think about our Baptism in the same way. There are many different layers to understanding our Baptism. They are all important but we want to make sure we get to the heart of the matter; to reach the core of what Baptism is and what it means.

Layer 1 – Baptism is entrance into the family of God. As a part of the Baptism liturgy, the congregation might speak together words of welcome to the newly baptized. "We welcome you into God's house and into the family of God!" Yes, it's true – baptism is one of the marks of the church. But there's another layer.

Layer 2 – Baptism washes away our sins. Most of the major events in the Bible involving water (the Flood, the Exodus, Jesus calming the storm) highlight both the destruction of evil and the salvation of the faithful. We have no righteousness of our own; we are sinners who need forgiveness. God uses Water along with His Word in baptism to wash away our sin and give us the forgiveness we need. "He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior." *Titus 3:5-6* It is true, we need our sins forgiven, and Baptism does that. But how? Well, there's another layer.

Layer 3 – Baptism unites us to Jesus' death and Resurrection. The place of our salvation is singular in time and space. When Christ died on the cross, He did so by becoming sin – by bearing in His body the sins of the whole world. That includes sins committed since Adam and Eve and extending out until Christ returns. And God, through Baptism, brings us to the very cross of Christ where our sins are forgiven. "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his." *Romans 6:3-5*

As a baptized person, you have died and have risen again. Sin and death no longer have power over you because you are in Christ who is alive! You are baptized! That is who you are – it is your identity.

How about this: Make sure your Baptism Birthday is marked on your calendar. At the very least, on that day, give thanks for the gift God gave you. And if you decided to do more – like throw a party – your pastor would be very happy to attend and celebrate with you.



Pastor Nathan Erb
Pastor Nathan Erb



Sunday, November 7 – Daylight Saving Time Ends (2 a.m.)

Thursday, November 11

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

Wednesday, November 24

7:00 p.m. – Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service

Thursday, November 25 – Thanksgiving Day

(Office closed and no preschool both on this day and Friday, Nov. 26)

Sunday, November 28 – The Season of Advent begins

Wednesdays, December 1, 8, 15

7:00 p.m. – Advent Midweek Worship with the theme "The Fullness of Time"

Friday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

7:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve Worship Service

10:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve Worship Service

Saturday, December 25 – The Nativity of Our Lord

10:00 a.m. – Christmas Day Worship Service with Holy Communion



HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH—LCMS

Sunday Worship Service: 10:00 a.m.

Adult Bible Class precedes Sunday Worship at 9:00 a.m.

5995 Main Street, Trumbull, CT 06611

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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).



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.



THANKFULNESS IN ACTION

Words by Maya Angelou

"Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer. And let faith be the bridge you build to overcome evil and welcome good."

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NEWSLETTER NOTES

Our next deadline is...

The next issue of The Holy Cross Word is the December edition. The deadline for articles

is Friday,

November 12.

Please take

note of this

earlier deadline

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.



WE ARE FAMILY

God's blessings to **William and Lauren (nee Janssen) Walker** and big sister **Bianca** upon the Baptism of their son and brother, **Dexter Troy Walker** on October 10. Dexter's sponsors are his uncle, Ryan Janssen, and his aunt, Anna Walker. We welcome Dexter Troy 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.



COVENANT TO CARE FOR CHILDREN

Annual "Giving Tree" will be presented by mid-November to help spread Christmas cheer

It's a couple weeks shy of Halloween as I write this, but I'm already thinking about Christmas and preparing for the annual Covenant to Care for Children "Giving Tree." Our "adopted" social worker, Mimose Laurenard (DCF-Bridgeport) will be doing her best to give me an updated caseload list with gift suggestions for the children by mid-November, so it will be my goal to have the "Giving Tree" poster in the narthex by Sunday, November 21. For many of the children, this will be the only Christmas gift he or she will receive.



As we have done for the past four years we will give each child a hat & mitten/glove set – a very "warm" and welcoming addition to the Christmas gift they will receive. Any time this month prior to seeing the "Giving Tree" poster, if you feel so moved to purchase a winter hat & mitten/glove set, you may leave it in the red "snowflake" collection box in the narthex. (Please, no "hand-me-down" sets; due to COVID these items must be brand new.) If more hats and mittens are needed by the time the "Giving Tree" is presented, ornament tags for these will be included on the "Giving Tree" poster.

If you do not have opportunity to be at the church when this "Giving Tree" poster is presented and would like to buy a gift for a child in Mimose's caseload, please contact me via my personal email address: schrocknroll@optonline.net. I will match up a child to you and send you the information needed for you to purchase the gift.

As you make preparations for the upcoming Christmas season, I hope you will include in your gift-giving list a Christmas gift and/or hat & mitten/glove set for one of the children that is under the care of DCF through Covenant to Care. The gifts need to be turned in, unwrapped, and are due no later than Sunday, December 12; this early due date gives me time to get the gifts wrapped and into Mimose's hands for delivery by December 15-16. And if you would like to provide a gift bag and tissue paper for the gift you are giving, I will certainly accept and appreciate that!! Thank you in advance for your support of this ministry to benefit children in crisis and in need.

Yours in Christ,

---MARY SCHROCK

Covenant to Care for Children Liaison

THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT

An example of thanksgiving, even when it seems counter-intuitive

Martin Rinkart, a German Lutheran minister, wrote the hymn "Now Thank We All Our God" in 1636. At the time, the Thirty Years' War was ravaging central Europe, claiming millions of lives. Rinkart served as pastor in Eilenburg, a walled town that became a crowded refuge for starving fugitives. Although Rinkart was struggling to provide for his own family, he opened his own home to people in need. After the plague entered Eilenburg, Rinkart conducted up to 50 funerals a day – including services for his wife and the only other two pastors in town. Amid the despair, he wrote many hymns, including "Now Thank We All Our God." Originally intended as a table prayer, it's now sung at Thanksgiving to remember God's "countless gifts of love" – even during hardships.

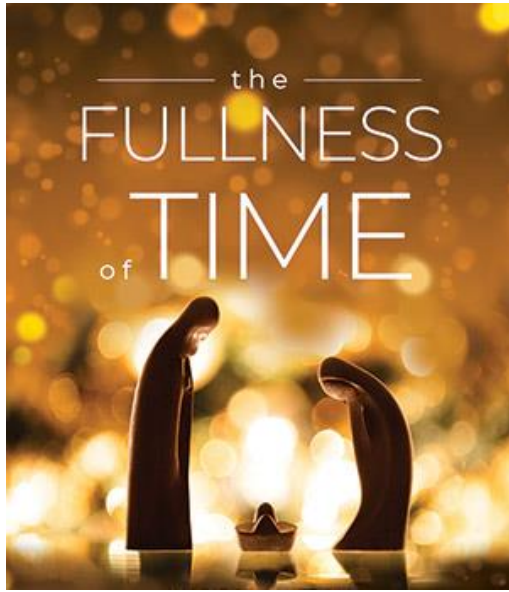
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PRAISE GOD FOR HIS ABUNDANT GOODNESS!

**Join your Holy Cross Family and Friends
at the Annual Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service**

Wednesday, Nov. 24 - 7:00 p.m.



Midweek Advent Services

Wednesdays, Dec. 1, 8, 15
at 7:00 p.m.

Celebrate Advent through a weekly devotional time with your Holy Cross family. Scripture readings, prayer, songs and a meditation will help you to draw closer to God during this special season of the year.

Our liturgy will be Holden Evening Prayer

At the end of November, look on the narthex table for "The Fullness of Time" devotion booklets, as well as Advent devotion booklets for families and an Advent sticker activity for young children.

OUR CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

The children will have fun talking about and practicing thankfulness

During the month of November, we will focus on giving thanks to God for all His blessings. We are thankful for the beauty of autumn, our homes and families, food, and most of all, God's gift of our Savior Jesus! We will also learn about the first Thanksgiving. We have so much to be thankful for both here at school and in our homes.

We look forward to having our annual Thanksgiving sharing party with all the children!

The teachers will cook a turkey and the parents



will send in the side dishes. Unfortunately, we will not be able to include the parents this year but we will send home lots of pictures and videos!

Our November Bible stories are focused on Moses...the crossing of the Red Sea, the Israelites in the desert, the 10 Commandments and the bronze snake.

All of us at the preschool would like to wish you and your family a very blessed Thanksgiving.

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



EVANGELISM AND YOU

Monthly director's report on things to know and even things to do

A couple of months into returning to the Evangelism Commission directorship, I can report since last month's update that I've been recruiting members for the commission and hope to report on that next time, had worked with the church office on getting a report on Pastor Erb's installation sent to the District office for use in its newsletter, and had reached out to the Synod for any direction it could provide on publicity, marketing and evangelism. Stay tuned on that.

In writing this month about thoughts on how you can be of help in accomplishing commission duties, I'd like to engage you readers in the evangelism process. "Engage" is the key word and here's why.

Since our new pastor has been installed, I hope you have seen how Pastor Erb, and even his own family, has engaged themselves in Holy Cross life. We're seeing in-service engagement with worshippers on key points of the day; we're hearing detailed messages interpreting the day's scripture readings; we often get a weekly pastoral message via e-mail on what's coming up in worship and elsewhere; a focus on that scripture has been brought back with a 9 a.m. Sunday Bible class for everyone; children are getting a personalized message in the service; our preschoolers are being engaged with special messages at Chapel Time each week held in the sanctuary; confirmation and first communion classes have begun; he has done minor tweaks on our website to be technologically helpful; he has put thoughts into a Holy Cross logo to use in various areas; Elisabeth created very useful bags and worship aids to help keep children busy during worship. In short, Pastor Erb has stepped in and engaged himself into the life of Holy Cross, a place personally unknown to him and his family just a few months ago but now a place he is taking baby steps to help spiritually for ourselves and our community.



How has he done this? Again, engage is the word. Engage has many definitions as a verb, including to attract or involve someone's interest or attention; cause someone to become involved; pledge or enter into a contract to do something; to participate or become involved in; to establish a meaningful contact or connection with; to move into position so as to come into operation. Things don't happen in this world without engaging in the process. To be disengaged means the opposite of all those definitions, of course, and the result is stagnation.

The Evangelism Commission areas of responsibility include helping members be engaged with the evangelism skills they have. Evangelizing is a direct command of our Lord Jesus. It's what we are supposed to be doing in our community. It's an area we hope to assist members discover their skills and talents.

But the first order of business in that regard is seeing how you can learn from how our pastor and church leaders are engaged in church life and by so learning from them that you become engaged yourself. Ask yourself if you are engaged in your church? Do you worship regularly? Do you participate in helping others via the many opportunities that come along throughout the year? Do you engage in study of Scripture? Do you parents get your children to focus on their faith first above all else? Parents must set the standard early in life of prioritizing what their children put first in their lives. To do otherwise is not serving God. They themselves are too young to know any better. Parents have to be the smart ones and know what the right engagement is.

We have a pastor who is engaging himself all over Holy Cross. If you haven't so engaged yourself into your church, follow his lead and come see what's been happening at Holy Cross and see how easily you can get acclimated into putting your faith on display.

Having written that, I again bring up that the Greeter program and narthex display case fall under the Evangelism Commission. If you are interested in engaging in either activity, please let me know.

Lastly, this **month's featured tracts** in the narthex are: Look for tracts that help you understand studying scripture during the year.

---CLIFF SCHROCK
Director of Evangelism

FINANCIAL NOTES

Offering update provided for the first three quarters of this calendar year

As part of our ongoing communication efforts, we are pleased to provide you with this quarterly financial update through September 2021.

The weekly envelope giving totaled \$182,782 through the end of September. This is less than the budget amount of \$197,000. As always, your ongoing support is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your generosity!

A few other items to highlight:

- We have a net deficit through the third quarter of the year of \$(18,760).
 - While envelope giving is less than budget, total income is greater than budget due to generous additional giving of \$42,500 of special Share the Hope offerings that will be used for major maintenance projects for our church and parsonage.
 - Total expenses have been above budget primarily due to significant maintenance costs for the parsonage and church. In addition, snow plowing was very costly earlier this year. Virtually all other categories are at, or below, budget and continue to be monitored very closely.
- Online giving continues to be very popular with our members...both via the website and via the "Give Plus" app. 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 and sharing of your resources to help us fulfill our mission here at Holy Cross! Please let us know if you have any questions.

Monthly Giving – January to September 2021

Month	Offering Actual	Offering Budget
January	\$18,113	\$21,000
February	20,122	21,000
March	23,602	25,000
April	16,869	21,000
May	20,417	24,000
June	18,661	21,000
July	19,637	21,000
August	26,004	21,000
September	19,357	22,000
Total	\$182,782	\$197,000

Income Statement – January to September 2021

	Actual	Budget
Total Income*	\$242,396	\$230,373
Total Expenses	(261,156)	(253,873)
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$(18,760)	\$(23,501)

* 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

LEARN FROM & BE INSPIRED BY SCRIPTURE

The Holy Cross Word monthly “Bible study on paper”: Acts, Chapter 7

Acts, Chapter 7, 60 verses—This chapter continues to show the excitement of the church’s early growth, but with the extra element of how growth is achieved through Christian leaders and followers being tested, sometimes in a starkly challenging way. Please pause now to read the full Chapter 7 of Acts (use an aid such as BibleGateway.com if needed).



Chapter analysis—

Taking a closer look at Chapter 7, Chapter 6 had shown the creation of deacon-type helpers in the church leadership and had closed with a focus on Stephen, who had been faithful, full of the Spirit and blessed by God to “do great miracles.” A Jewish group of Free Men had gotten into extreme arguments with Stephen. They were driven to bring Stephen down. When it was obvious they had no chance against a highly faithful Stephen, they resorted to their only option: falsehoods. The Jews hired people to spread false gossip that Stephen had said things against God and Moses. In front of a group of Jewish leaders, the accusations went into a fever pitch. Through it all, Stephen was such a focus that people were transfixed by him and couldn’t take their eyes off of him. Luke writes that Stephen was thought to have the face of an angel as the lies were spoken.

When the high priest asks Stephen, “Are these things true?” to begin Chapter 7, he was about to learn that was the wrong question. Stephen was ready to give him an earful in his defense. What happens next is one of the most memorable early Christian events that didn’t involve Jesus Himself. Stephen recites the history of God and His people, beginning with Abraham, and intertwines Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, the prophets and Solomon, a history that illustrated how Israel repeatedly rejected leaders. But the history led up to Jesus being the fulfillment of the Old Testament. Starting with verse 51, Stephen hits a crescendo by telling the leaders that they continue to ignore God, including the Righteous One, Jesus, who they had killed. The inference was that they were small minded people who didn’t see the big picture and had been unfaithful to God.



When Stephen had finished speaking, the leaders could no longer contain themselves, exploding in anger, gnashing and grinding their teeth. At the same time, Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave his final witness, saying, as he looked to heaven, that he saw a vision of Jesus at God’s right side and he verbally described what he saw. By God allowing Stephen to see this magnificent vision, it helped Stephen to feel courageous. No longer able to hold back, the leaders stopped their ears so Stephen’s words would no longer be heard and they reverted to violence. In a raucous scene, Stephen was taken to the outskirts of Jerusalem and stoned. The act of stoning was as cruel and barbaric as it sounded.

One reference noted that “after a person was convicted and sentenced to die by stoning, he would be taken to the stoning place outside the court. Before the actual execution the victim was called upon to make a confession. As he got close to the stoning place, his garments were removed. Then one of the witnesses would push the accused into a 12-foot deep pit. If this did not kill the victim, a second witness would drop a large stone on him. If he still lived, he would then be stoned by all the members of the congregation of Israel.”

Luke does not write whether Stephen’s death followed in this fashion, but we do know that Stephen, showing a brave Christian attitude to the end, and undoubtedly knowing he was doomed, was heard to exhort while he endured such a painful death, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” With those words, he soon died, the first person we know of who died for testifying about Jesus. Saul the persecutor witnessed this and said the events that had brought Stephen’s death were a “good thing.”

In Chapter 8 we will learn how the believers recovered from this setback, helped by Philip.

Sources: Harper Study Bible; The Everyday Bible: New Testament; Egermeier’s Bible Story Book; The Acts of the Apostles, Neal M. Flanagan.

Next month: Acts, Chapter 8.

---CLIFF SCHROCK



November

BIRTHDAYS

Nov. 1: Kyle Helminger
 Nov. 2: Gavin Dowling
 Nov. 3: Kristen Cerone
 Peggy Liptack
 Alex Riccio
 Alexis Rodriguez
 Nov. 5: Lydia Struzik
 Nov. 6: Sherry Duff
 Nov. 7: Michael Antoniou
 Kevin Conte
 Nov. 9: Sigourney Norman

Nov. 11: Bob Burns
 Dylan Chirgwin
 Nov. 12: Ingrid Cerone
 Nov. 14: Jon Halls
 Nov. 15: Ryan Matthews
 Nov. 16: Joey Vaitkus
 Nov. 18: Christine Matthews
 Nov. 24: Harald Dale
 Nov. 25: Keith Chirgwin
 Nov. 29: Samantha Sylling

A GRATITUDE GAME

A Colorado mom and Women's Ministry Leader – Janna Firestone – suggests a way for families to relax and share their thanks

Years ago, ads for a toy-store chain featured an animated kangaroo jumping on a frown to turn it upside down. That reminds me of family life, which can feel like a nonstop attempt to keep everyone happy. Busy schedules, grumpy kids and tired parents can be a bad combination.

be thankful!

When our family needs to turn frowns upside down, we play the thankful game. The rules are simple: We take turns sharing one thing we're thankful for. Everyone plays. No one can pass. No repeats are allowed. Our kids, now teens, still chime in.

As we share gratitude for football, Grandma, hugs, warm brownies, coffee and more, kids tend to stop bickering, and adults get a mental reset. Try playing — and bring on lots of smiles!

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CHURCH CHUCKLES...TIMES 2!! To grandmother's house they **DIDN'T** go!



For laughs at your Thanksgiving dinner table

Why was the Thanksgiving soup so expensive?
It had 24 carrots!

Knock knock. *Who's there?* Arthur. *Arthur Who?*
 Arthur any leftovers?

My family said no more Thanksgiving jokes...
 ...but I said I couldn't quit cold turkey.

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