
THE

CROSSWORD

November 2023

A PUBLICATION OF HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

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THANKS & GIVING

from Pastor Nathan Erb

Looking back on the past year at Holy Cross, there is much to be thankful for. As always, I am grateful for you and the numerous ways you have contributed to the church's ministry. There have been some new events and opportunities, and some new faces are stepping into leadership roles to help guide our congregation into the future. I am excited to see where God leads us in terms of men's and women's ministries, opportunities for our youth, and the impact we can have on our community. I would really like to see these ministries thrive and grow, but there is a chance that will not happen.

When I first arrived here, I was told that Holy Cross members were generous, and that whenever a need arose, you would rise to the occasion and contribute. That is something I have witnessed firsthand, and it is wonderful. For instance, we talked about the need for updates and repairs to our basement and bathrooms during the most recent Town Hall meeting. Some of you have already contributed without even seeing a budget or a plan! I can not help but be grateful for your generosity. But there is an elephant in the room.

While special giving helps with large projects, our regular giving falls short. A quick glance at our budget shows that we are seriously behind. To make up the difference, we had to dip into our reserves. This is not a long-term solution.

More information about our current situation and what it could mean for the future will be provided to you in the coming months. But, before we go too deep, I think it is important to be prepared to respond with spiritual wisdom. We are the church, and you are a member of it. And belonging as such means something entirely different than belonging to any other organization - and your approach to giving should be a spiritual one.

Listen to Luke, the author of Acts, describe the early church. *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had everything in common."* (Acts 2:42-44)

There are many ways to be devoted to something, but one of them is to be present and active in the life of the church, gathering to worship, pray, learn, and receive the gifts God provides. The more present you are, the more engaged you can be, and the more invested you will become in the ministry. This leads to gratitude for what you have and a willingness to be generous with what you give.

Luke continues: *"And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."* (Acts 2:45-47)

Why do you think the Lord increased their number? Was it a direct result of their generosity? Did people notice that they could get free handouts if they joined the church? Was God rewarding these Christians

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PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL

from Kerry Geffert

October was a month of poignant moments for me. They began with a trip to Michigan for my 45th college reunion. Many classmates are still happily pursuing their careers, but a growing number of us chatted over how we planned to spend our retirement years.

Basically, my classmates and I are moving into a new life phase. No longer concerned with the climb to the top, we're more focused on how we spend our time on the plateau knowing what is to come next. Spurred by a couple classmates, our class is raising funds for an endowed scholarship program supporting our college's study abroad program, the program that drew many of us to this institution. In short, we're looking at our legacy and what we want to leave for future generations.

During the drive home, I had time to contemplate the importance of legacy in one's life. What is important? And how do we convey that importance to future generations? The same can be asked of our faith life. What about our faith, and the practice thereof, is important? How do we convey that importance to future generations? Where do our priorities lie? Do they lie in regular worship and Christian education? Or do they lie in temporal pleasures influenced by the changing values of society?

Those thoughts resurfaced a week later as I attended the bat mitzvah of my great-niece. For those unfamiliar, a bar/bat mitzvah is a coming-of-age ceremony for Jewish teens, something akin to our confirmation. The ceremony was the Saturday Sabbath service during which my great-niece chanted a section of the Torah – in Hebrew. Family members and others important to her took part through special duties, blessings and the presentation of a tallit (prayer shawl). The congregation actively participated through songs and the liturgy, in both English and Hebrew.

As I reflected on the ceremony, I was struck by the deep sense of history and tradition it contained.

My great-niece was participating in a ceremony that goes back over 500 years! Certainly, some elements of the ceremony have evolved and songs have changed, but the key elements have been passed down from generation to generation, providing a comforting connection

to the past, the present and the future. Our Lutheran liturgy provides a similar comfort; at least it does for me. It is a connection I have to previous generations, and it's one Karen and I sought to provide our children. Others may eschew tradition and the connection through our faith practices, but I maintain that enduring cultures and societies place high value on passing these elements

from one generation to the next.

And then finally, we *finally* held our first Tag Sale. We had determined that our best option was an event in our parking lot where visibility would be greatest. Thus, we had to postpone the event twice due to rain, prompting one of our members to quip that perhaps God didn't want us to host the event. On the third date we moved indoors. Well, lo and behold, people still came, thanks in part to the big sign in front! Unfortunately, aside from those working the event, only one Holy Cross member came out to support us, but that disappointment was overshadowed by the many others who did stop in. The day was filled with discovery ("I didn't know there was a church here!"), conversation and a welcoming spirit. We hope this is the first of many future events that provide a welcoming atmosphere for the community. Did God not want us to hold a tag sale? More likely, He was patiently waiting for us to figure out that holding it indoors was the better way to go!

So my October was a lesson in priorities. Every day is an opportunity to convey what we believe is important. Every day is an opportunity to value the past as a connection to the future. And every day is an opportunity to listen for what God is telling us. How are you using every day? How are you using every Sunday? +

First Things First



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THE CROSSWORD

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THANKS AND GIVING

(Continued from page 1)

for their good works? Maybe. But why were the people so generous? What drove them to sell everything they owned and give it to those in need? It is because they trusted that God would provide for them in every way and because they knew God's heart was to bring salvation to everyone. They knew this because they devoted themselves to God and his Word. It is obvious that by releasing their personal attachment to money and possessions, they would not only be cared for by the Christian community, but they would also find joy and freedom in serving the Lord.

The Apostle Paul will later affirm their faith and actions when he writes his letter to the Corinthians:

“Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, “He has distributed freely; he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.” (2 Corinthians 9:6-10)

It stands to reason that if you want a garden full of food - enough to last a season - you will need to plant a lot of seeds. This will require a financial investment. This investment is complicated by the fact that it involves risk. What if none of the seeds sprout? What if it is too hot or there is not enough rain? What if...what if...what if? We might be tempted to think the same way about giving to the church. But one thing is certain: if you do not invest in the garden, there will not be one. Similarly, if you do not contribute your time, talents, and money to the church, there will be none. Or, at the very least, there may not be one here.

Make no mistake, our giving, or our work, do not determine the fate of Christ's church. The church is built on Christ who has died, risen, and reigns forever; it will not fall. But we have been called to be a light on Main Street in Trumbull, and I want to be a part of a church that grows and thrives and produces fruit! That requires your generosity—the kind of generosity that stems from faith in God's provision and love for his people. If you are thankful for the all that God gives you and for Holy Cross, the place where he grows you, then consider your giving as a way to thank God through generosity, and as an investment in the growth of God's kingdom—and the Lord will add to our number daily those who are being saved. +

Pastor Nathan Erb

NOTEWORTHY

News, Notes, and Acknowledgements from the Holy Cross Community.

FLOWERS FOR THE ALTAR

Thank you to Lorraine and Jim Finch for supplying us with flowers from their garden for the altar each Sunday during the past growing season. I encourage everyone to thank them personally for all their efforts to make them available.

- Edith Skoog

ON A SIMILAR NOTE

I also want to thank the Finches for their hours of work to beautify our gardens and grounds. Together with the newly forming Gardens and Grounds Team, they have donated more than 80 hours of time (along with some plants, mulch, and grass seed) to maintaining and enhancing our landscaping.

In addition, thanks to Chad, Bret, Nate, and Kyle Helminger for removing the tall grass by the office door, which was getting out of hand.

- Pastor Nathan Erb

PASTOR BILL MEYER, AND MARIE, RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR MANY YEARS OF SERVICE

On September 28, the Atlantic District (LCMS) held its annual “Witness in the Public Square” event to honor men and women of the church who have served faithfully, and tirelessly, to share the love of Jesus and advance our church’s mission. This year’s witnesses included our beloved interim pastor, Rev. William Meyer and his wife, Deaconess

Marie Meyer. They both gave fantastic speeches! More than 200 attendees participated in the luncheon, which is the primary mission fundraising event for the Atlantic District. Pastor Bill and Christine Flammann, Sherry Duff and John and Pat Deloge attended in support of the Meyers. Among the attendees were dear friends Pastor Chip Froehlich and his wife Kathy (Winter) a former member of Holy Cross.

We thank God for Pastor Bill and Marie Meyer, for their service, and that Holy Cross was able to benefit from their ministry.



Top Left: Pastor Bill and Deaconess Marie Meyer. **Top Right:** Pastor Chip and Kathy Froehlich. **Bottom:** Sherry Duff, John & Pat Deloge, Bill and Marie Meyer, Christine and Bill Flammann.

We love to hear from you!

If you have any news, notes, or acknowledgments that you’d like to share with the congregation...please let us know!

Submissions are due by the 10th of the month preceding the edition date. Email office@holycrosstrumbull.com



BUILDING BLOCKS

from Holy Cross Christian Preschool

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 are looking forward to having our annual Thanksgiving Sharing Party with all the children! The school will provide roasted chicken and the parents will send in the side dishes.

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 here at the preschool would like to wish you and your family a very blessed Thanksgiving. +

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/](http://www.facebook.com/HolyCrossPreschoolTrumbull/)

CHILI COOK-OFF

11.12.2023

+DESSERT AUCTION

5-7:00 PM

Hot Prizes for the best chili!
Proceeds benefit our Youth Mission Trip.



Sign Up at HOLYCROSS.LIFE/CHILI

HELPING THE NEXT GENERATION LISTEN, LEARN, AND SERVE.

From Pastor Nathan Erb

During the summer of 2024, many of our youth will venture over to Harrisburg, PA to participate in a week-long mission trip. We will be joining forces with an organization called Youthworks, who set up service sites across the country, and host groups all summer to serve specific communities.

Participating in mission trips is an eye-opening and transformative experience for young people. It goes beyond the typical tourist excursion and provides an opportunity for personal growth, cultural understanding, and meaningful service. These experiences hold immense value, not just for the communities being served but also for the youth involved. Having completed at least a dozen of these kinds of trips in my ministry, I can tell you that they are among my favorite experiences for a variety of reasons.

Building Empathy and Compassion

Mission trips offer young people the chance to step outside their comfort zones and witness living conditions and challenges different from their own. By immersing themselves in diverse communities and interacting with individuals facing adversity, they gain a deeper understanding of the needs of different communities. This firsthand exposure cultivates empathy and compassion, fostering a sense of responsibility to make a positive impact.

Expanding Cultural Awareness

Exposure to different cultures and customs is a vital aspect of mission trips. Young participants are encouraged to embrace diversity and appreciate the unique perspectives and traditions of the communities they visit. These experiences can lead to increased cultural sensitivity and a broader worldview, equipping them with valuable skills for a globalized world.

Personal Growth and Self-Discovery

Mission trips challenge young people to confront their own strengths and limitations. They often find themselves in unfamiliar environments, working on tasks that require resilience, adaptability, and teamwork. These experiences contribute to personal growth and self-discovery, helping participants develop skills such as problem-solving, leadership, and effective communication.

Strengthening Faith and Values

For many young people, mission trips are a spiritual journey. They offer an opportunity to deepen their faith, connect with a higher

purpose, and live out their values through service. Engaging in acts of kindness and selflessness during mission trips can be a profound and transformative experience, reinforcing their commitment to their beliefs.

Building Lifelong Friendships

Mission trips are not just about the destination; they are also about the people you share the experience with. Young participants often form strong bonds with their fellow volunteers. These connections can lead to lifelong friendships, fostering a sense of community and support.

Fostering a Sense of Responsibility

By participating in mission trips, young people learn about the power of making a difference in the lives of others. This firsthand experience of service instills a sense of responsibility, motivating them to continue engaging in charitable activities and contributing to their local and global communities.

Gaining Perspective on Global Issues

Mission trips provide a unique perspective on issues that affect different communities such as poverty, access to education, healthcare, and environmental sustainability. Young participants become more informed and aware of these challenges, inspiring them to take action and advocate for positive change.

Career and Educational Benefits

Engaging in mission trips can also have practical benefits for young people's futures. Many universities and employers value volunteer experience, as it demonstrates qualities like empathy, leadership, and a commitment to making the world a better place. It can set them apart on college applications and job resumes.

The importance of young people participating in mission trips cannot be overstated. These experiences not only have a positive impact on the communities they serve but also shape the lives of the young participants. Mission trips foster empathy, cultural awareness, personal growth, and a sense of responsibility. They provide opportunities to strengthen faith and values, build lifelong friendships, and gain a broader perspective on global issues. For young people seeking personal development, the chance to make a difference, and a deeper understanding of the world, participating in mission trips is a meaningful and life-changing endeavor.

I personally think that *every* teenager should experience a mission trip, especially one that values relationships, respects communities and connects the hands of service with the heart of Jesus. These trips show students how to use their lives to love and value others better.

And here's where you come in! You can invest in our young people and not only give them a great experience, but one that will impact their life, faith, and in turn the lives of others.

The youth of Holy Cross are committed to this service but could use your help in getting there. It costs each participant \$430 to attend. Some of this will be paid by their own responsibility, but we also hope to raise a significant portion of the costs through fundraising and your generosity. With your prayer and support we will not only reach our goal of arriving on site, but have an opportunity to share the love of Jesus with those whom we serve.

If you have any questions about this opportunity, or how you can support us directly, please reach out to me! And, above all, pray that God would use this trip, and our young people, for impactful service to the people of Harrisburg. +



The Otherworldly Vision

By Gerhard Forde

The festival of All Saints is for the commemoration of the saints who have gone before us and have passed on to their eternal rest. Since it practically coincides with Reformation Day, it's almost impossible to observe All Saints without recalling that the Reformers had some important things to say about the saints. We don't have any ecclesiastical machinery for "canonizing" saints or for setting one off from another. We do not pray to or through the saints, nor are they objects of worship or even veneration.

But nevertheless, we can and we should remember them. This is a day for remembering together, commemorating the work of apostles, martyrs, and all the saints. Some such saints are named; but the vast majority are unnamed. We remember those who by their blood, sweat, and tears have left their mark on the church, the Body of Christ, to which we belong. And we cannot, I think, commemorate this day without a certain sense of awe and respect. Remember that when you enter the church you are ushered into the presence of this great host. You are inheriting their legacy.

But even though All Saints is a day for remembering the dead, it is not a day of mourning. It is a day of celebration! In the epistle lesson for today, John, the seer, presents us with a vision in which all the saints, all the redeemed, all those who are sealed are present (Rev. 7:1–

17). Everyone who belongs is there. That certainly is the meaning of all the statistics and the number 144,000. Not, as some would have it, that the number is limited by arbitrary decree, but that everyone is there who ought to be there, 12,000 from all the tribes of Israel and Judah, and a great multitude from every nation of the earth, a multitude so great that no one can count it.

But even though All Saints is a day for remembering the dead, it is not a day of mourning. It is a day of celebration!

And the angels hold back the winds and the sea so that no one will be harmed. And what are the saints doing? They are clothed in white robes, waving palm branches and shouting: "Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Rev. 7:10). And everyone else, the angels, the elders, and the four living creatures cannot resist their contagious joy, so they all join in the chorus: "Amen! Blessing and Glory and Wisdom and Thanksgiving and Honor and Power and Might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen!" (Rev. 7:12)

Gerhard Forde (1927-2005) was an American Lutheran Theologian. This article can be found at <https://www.1517.org/articles/the-otherworldly-vision>

Celebrating this Month

NOVEMBER

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

- 1 Kyle Helminger
- 2 Gavin Dowling
- 3 Kristen Cerone
- 3 Peggy Liptack
- 3 Alex Riccio
- 3 Alexis Rodriguez
- 5 Lydia Struzik
- 6 Sherry Duff
- 6 Dexter Walker
- 7 Michael Antoniou
- 7 Kevin Conte
- 9 Sigourney Norman
- 11 Dylan Chirgwin
- 12 Ingrid Cerone
- 14 Jon Halls
- 15 Ryan Matthews
- 16 Joey Vaitkus
- 17 Reese Romano
- 18 Christine Matthews
- 24 Harald Dale
- 25 Keith Chirgwin
- 29 Samantha Sylling

BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS

- Dave Bogen
- John Deloge
- Abigail Erb
- Elisabeth Erb
- Bill Flammann
- Wendy Krolides
- Deb Leslie
- Kristen Messerschmitt
- Peter Messerschmitt
- Daniel Nyitrai
- Nancy Sabol
- Barbara Schneider
- Andrew Sylling
- Lori Thompson
- Cole Veteri
- Rebecca Veteri

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Date Name

- 19 Tim and Sarah Senft

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!