



The
HOLY CROSS WORD

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

APRIL 2015

"Share the Hope"

VOL. LVIII, NO. 8

REV. ERIC A. WISMAR ACCEPTS HOLY CROSS CALL

Acceptance letter printed here; enthusiastic to begin his Trumbull ministry on the Day of Pentecost, May 24

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow! One month shy of a full-year vacancy, the church will have a new pastor—and family—to join in ministry in the Trumbull community. Pastor Eric Wismar has accepted our call to be Holy Cross' third pastor. He will be installed on May 17, and conduct his first service on May 24, the Day of Pentecost. All church members should be joyous participants at both services as we begin a journey together with our new shepherd. Pastor Wismar's decision was announced at both March 8 worship services. His acceptance letter, which follows, arrived via postal mail at Holy Cross on March 9 but had been previously sent by e-mail to Call Committee Chair Michele Vichiola Van Wart.

March 5, 2015

The people of Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Dear friends in Christ,

After prayerful consideration of your call I have been led to accept your invitation to join you in ministry in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ as pastor to your congregation. I look forward to being installed in



office in Trumbull on Sunday, May 17. I greatly appreciate the kind hospitality that you extended to me and my family during our recent visit and look forward to working with you in the coming months and years. I would also like to thank all of the people who were members of your call committee; they gave me a most helpful picture of your parish.

My first Sunday with you will be May 24 – the Day of Pentecost. What a wonderful and fitting day to begin – the day in which the Spirit of the Lord came to the Church and gave it power for mission. I look forward to sharing that power with you through the preaching of the good news, through the absolution of sins, through the waters of Holy Baptism and through the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Between now and the time of my arrival at Holy Cross there is much to be done; I'm sure that Pastor Beinke will continue his gracious Christian leadership in guiding you through these weeks. May the Lord continue to bless you as together we seek to live to His glory.

Faithfully yours,

Pastor Eric A. Wismar



See Page 3 for details about our
Holy Week and Easter Worship Services





Thursday, April 2 – Maundy Thursday

7:30 p.m. – Worship Service with Holy Communion and Stripping of the Altar

Friday, April 3 – Good Friday

Noon – Midday Service
7:30 p.m. – Tenebrae Service

Sunday, April 5 – The Resurrection of Our Lord: EASTER

7:00 a.m. – Easter Festival Eucharist
8:30 a.m. – Easter Breakfast (immediately following the early service)
10:30 a.m. – Easter Festival Eucharist

Tuesday, April 7

5:00 p.m. – Holy Cross serves Community Supper at St. John's Episcopal-Bridgeport

Sunday, April 26

Rite of Confirmation at the 10:30 a.m. Service

Sunday, May 3

1:30 p.m. – Greater Bridgeport CROP Walk

Sunday, May 17

4:00 p.m. – Installation of Rev. Eric Wismar as Pastor at Holy Cross



*Wishing you a
Blessed Easter!*

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

5995 Main Street, Trumbull, CT 06611

Office Phone: 203-268-4555; Pastor's Study Phone: 203-268-7555

Church Office E-mail: holycrss@mindspring.com FAX: 203-268-5499

Website: www.holycrosstrumbull.org

Christian Preschool Phone: 203-268-6471 E-mail: mglennonhccp@mindspring.com

Worship Services – Sunday: 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.
First and third Mondays of the month: 7:00 p.m.

VACANCY PASTOR: Rev. Robert Beinke (from St. Peter Lutheran-Norwalk)
203-847-1252, stpeterlcpastor@yahoo.com

MUSIC DIRECTOR: Michael J. Gilbertson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' PRESIDENT: Kerry Geffert

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' VICE-PRESIDENT: Michele Van Wart

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' SECRETARY: Jeannie Mones

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' TREASURER: Greg Dowling

NEWSLETTER MANAGING EDITOR: Cliff Schrock

NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION: Mary Schrock



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).



**Like
Holy Cross
on Facebook!**

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



**A DELICIOUS THOUGHT
Humorous words for this
Easter season from actress
and comedian Caroline Rhea**

"I lied on my Weight Watchers list. I put down that I had three eggs...but they were Cadbury chocolate eggs."

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NEWSLETTER NOTES

Our next deadline is...

The next issue of The Holy Cross Word is the May edition. The deadline for all articles is Wednesday, April 15.

Please turn in your article(s) to the newsletter mailbox, located outside the church office, or send them via e-mail to:

holycrss@mindspring.com.

Unless you have a lengthy article, we encourage you to use the "Information Form," located in a box on the narthex table. You may use this form to submit details for upcoming events, the "We Are Family" and "Thank You" columns, and other short items. After filling it out (please sign your name), put it in the newsletter mailbox.



HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SERVICES

March 29: Palm Sunday

Worship at 8 and 10:30 a.m.

At the late service
the Sunday School
students will enter
with palms and offer
a musical selection.



April 2: Maundy Thursday

7:30 p.m. - Service
with Holy Communion
and Stripping of the Altar



April 3: Good Friday



Noon – Midday
Service

7:30 p.m. –
Tenebrae Service

We will focus on the
Seven Last Words of Christ



April 5: Easter Sunday

Celebrate the Resurrection
of our Lord!

Our Guest Pastor will be
Rev. Timothy Yeadon,
president of the
New England District-LCMS

Worship
with us
at 7:00* a.m.
or 10:30 a.m.



8:30 a.m. Easter Breakfast

* Please note early time

THOUGHTS FROM OUR VACANCY PASTOR

What sweet comfort there is in Christ's resurrection

What good news you received last month – you'll be receiving a new Pastor! Truly God is good to His people and comforts us in our need. Easter is the best example of this.

The Gospel reading in church this Easter Sunday is from Mark 16. Mark's account of Jesus' resurrection is unique, with two significant differences from the accounts given in the other Gospels. First of all, we are told that the women who went to the tomb were confronted inside the tomb by an angel, not outside. The angel not only told them that Jesus had risen and was not there, but also told them, "Go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee." This specific mention of the angel inside the tomb and of Peter would have been of great comfort and strength to the Christians in Rome, for they were soon to undergo suffering. A great fire swept Rome in 64 A.D., and Nero, the Roman emperor, blamed the Christians for it. Under him a great persecution erupted in Rome and parts of Italy against Christians. The Roman historian Tacitus wrote of it:

"Nero fabricated scapegoats—and punished with every refinement the notoriously depraved Christians (as they were popularly called)... First, Nero had self-acknowledged Christians arrested. Then, on their information, large numbers of others were condemned... Their deaths were made farcical. Dressed in wild animals' skins, they were torn to pieces by dogs or crucified or made into torches to be ignited after dark as substitutes for daylight."

As a result, Christians began to literally go underground—to the catacombs, a series of tunnels and burial tombs cut in the soft rock under Rome. There, among the dead, they sought protection and safety. They must have wondered: who would deliver them from death?

Mark comforts these Christians, and us all, with the words of the angel who stood in the tomb, the place of death: "He has risen!...He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you." In Jesus, death is overcome! In His resurrection we have life! He rolls away the stone from this tomb for us all! And, for those Christians who denied Christ in the face of persecution, there is the comforting message given to Peter, who had denied Jesus: "Go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee." The Jesus who rose and forgave Peter would also receive them. We can all look forward to seeing Him, not in Galilee, but in heaven itself. This is our comfort and our sure hope!

To this day Christ's people suffer at the hands of evil men and evil regimes, especially in Islamic and Communist countries. We need to keep these brothers and sisters in Christ in our prayers. We ourselves are tempted to be silent and so deny Jesus, lest we face ridicule or loss, and so we need to pray for strength for ourselves. Above all, we need to be in our Lord's house regularly to be comforted by His forgiving presence and raised up by His life.

None of us knows what tomorrow will bring, or what pressures we will face for believing in Jesus and following His teaching. We do know, however, that the One we follow is the Lord of life and death!! In Him there is forgiveness and life everlasting for everyone. Listen to Him, entrust your life to Him, and bow before Him in thankfulness and praise. You will find freedom and life everlasting!

In Christ Jesus, our Lord,

---PASTOR ROBERT BEINKE

St. Peter Lutheran-Norwalk and Vacancy Pastor-Holy Cross



PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL

Exhale! Our new pastor is coming; let's all respond enthusiastically and with commitment

God is good. This is a statement intoned by a dear friend, typically when we are discussing some adversity in her life. Despite the trials and tribulations, God is good. He stands beside us. God is good. Three words that came to mind upon hearing that the Reverend Eric Wismar had accepted our call to be Holy Cross' next pastor. Not that our vacancy has been an adversity; far from it. Patience-testing, yes, at times, but not an adversity. God is most certainly good.

The next word that came to mind was "exhale." It wasn't until then that I realized that I had been subconsciously "holding my breath" for how long, I don't know. Hoping and trusting, yet with enough uncertainty to cause some anxiety. Allowing doubt to creep in even though I knew that God would see us through. Does this sound familiar? Did you feel that this process would never end? Did that cause you to dread coming to church?

Yes, God is good. He has called Pastor Wismar to our congregation. Now is our opportunity to respond, beyond exhaling. How? Perhaps the best response – if you don't already – is to make weekly worship attendance a priority. Then use your time and talents in support of Holy Cross and our mission. You're a member; be an active member.

There will be opportunities in the near future to aid the Wismar family with their transition to Trumbull. Our Transition Committee, led by Kristen Messerschmitt, will be reaching out for volunteers to help with the many tasks involved in a relocation. Some tasks will be once-and-done activities; others may last a few weeks. In addition to the Transition Committee's work will be activities related to the installation service (the date is mentioned several times in this newsletter) and preparation of the parsonage. Please step up when asked. Better yet, contact me to volunteer and I'll connect you with the best group. The next three months will set the tone for the future. Your response, even a lack of response, will contribute to that tone.



*And lo,
I am with you
ALWAYS...*

—Matthew 28:20

And what better example of stepping up than our outstanding Call Committee! As we prepare for the arrival of Pastor Wismar and his family, the committee's work is drawing to a close. Please join me in expressing your sincere appreciation to Michele Vichiola-Van Wart, Committee Chair, and her committee – Diane Dietman, Jon Halls, Kendra Norman, Matt Rentz, Cliff Schrock and DJ Senft. We give thanks for their dedication to the task and to Holy Cross. Let them know you appreciate their service.

These are, indeed, exciting times for Holy Cross. The joy of Easter and the resurrection adds to the sense of new life within our congregation. Jesus gave His life in order that we might be saved. In response, what will you be willing to do to further the work of YOUR congregation? What will you do to show your support of Pastor Wismar and his ministry?

---KERRY GEFFERT
Holy Cross President

CROP WALK

Fight hunger one step at a time at annual walk on May 3

The CROP Walk will be held Sunday, May 3, at 1:30 p.m., at the United Congregational Church, located at the corner of State Street and Park Avenue, Bridgeport. The walk benefits world hunger and hunger-related programs in the Bridgeport area. Sign-up at Holy Cross will begin on April 12. Please sign up to either be a walker or to support our walkers.

---CAROL BURNS



Take Note

DURING OUR PASTORAL VACANCY anyone in need of spiritual care may contact Rev. Robert Beinke, our Vacancy Pastor, at St. Peter Lutheran Church in Norwalk, 203-847-1252, stpeterlcpastor@yahoo.com. You may also phone Kerry Geffert, Board President, 203-925-8341; Gary Messerschmitt, Head Shepherd, 203-220-8580; or the Church Office, 203-268-7555 (*office hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.*).

Easter Breakfast



E A S T E R B R E A K F A S T

**Sunday, April 5
at 8:30 a.m.
in the
Froehlich
Fellowship Hall**

Please join your Holy Cross family and friends for this annual fellowship tradition.

Worship with us at the 7:00 service and stay for breakfast

or

Come for breakfast at 8:30 and worship with us at the 10:30 service

***If you plan to attend,
please sign up
in the narthex.***

Breakfast casseroles, muffins, bagels, baked goods and fruit salad are needed.

If you can provide any of these items, please indicate this on the sign-up sheet.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Our music director experiences successful debut

Our Holy Cross family is truly blessed to have many talented individuals in our midst, including our Music Director, Michael Gilbertson. On March 4, a premiere of one of Michael's choral pieces was performed by Musica Sacra, described by *The New York Times* as "the notable professional chorus and mainstay of the New York choral scene." That evening, with the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine as the setting, the choir presented four pieces by living composers, three of them premieres. Here is an excerpt from *The New York Times* review of that concert:



"Kent Tritle, the choir's music director, conducted.....Michael Gilbertson's "Returning" [which] explores themes of love, regret and time, voiced as a conversation between David and Jonathan of the Hebrew bible and set to lyrics by Kai Hoffman-Krull.

"The opening section, which the choir repeated as an encore at the end of the concert, proved particularly beautiful. Its texts, initially sung by the sopranos, unfolded over a gentle humming that increased in intensity, with the line 'What makes us choose' sung with declamatory passion."

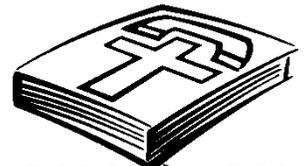
Congratulations, Michael!

---KERRY GEFFERT

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

Submit address, phone, e-mail changes for new church directory

The church office plans to update the Holy Cross phone/address membership directory (blue cover dated Spring 2013) this spring. If you – or any member of your family listed in the current directory – have a new phone number, mailing address or e-mail address, please submit the changes in writing to the church office. Also, if you have a child who is no longer living at home, please update the office by giving us his or her new contact information.



**CHURCH
D I R E C T O R Y**

In an effort to make it easier for members to update their information, during the month of April there will be a small display on the back table of the narthex.

This display will include a copy of the current directory. When you come to Worship you can look up your name and note if the listed information needs to be changed/updated. There will be forms available for you to list changes.

You may submit your changes via:

- 1) Filling out a form available on the back narthex table;
- 2) E-mail: holycrss@mindspring.com;
- 3) Putting a note in my "Church Office" mailbox.

As with our current directory, we will include e-mail addresses. If your e-mail address is not listed in the current directory and you would like to have it listed, please submit this e-dress in writing.

All changes are due by Sunday, April 26. Thank you.

---MARY SCHROCK
Church Office Administrator

DISCIPLESHIP COMMISSION

Rise and shine and give God the glory on Easter; attend breakfast fellowship

Join us for our annual Easter Breakfast on Sunday, April 5, at 8:30 a.m. There are sign-up sheets on the narthex table – one for volunteers to help with the breakfast set-up the day prior (*Saturday, April 4 at 9 a.m.*), and one for indicating that you and your family are attending the breakfast and what you will bring to share. We are looking for people to bring an egg casserole, muffins, bagels, pastries or fruit salad. Help to make this annual breakfast buffet “egg-ceptionally” yummy.



We had successful soup suppers during the Lenten season! Thank you to all who made those delicious soups and homemade breads.

Our commission also sent Easter Care Packages to our college students and our shut-ins.

---DONNA BOGEN
Discipleship Director

FINANCIAL NOTE

Enjoy the convenience of electronic giving; it assists you and the church

Holy Cross wants to remind you that we offer electronic giving as a way to automate your regular weekly offering. Electronic giving offers convenience for individual congregation members and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation.



Electronic Giving

Direct Debit Giving is used to automatically transfer funds from your checking or savings account to the church's bank account.

Credit and Debit Card Giving lets you make offerings automatically on a pre-determined schedule using a credit or debit card.

Online Giving lets you go to www.holycrosstrumbull.org at any time to set up an automatic donation plan, change your donation plan, make a one-time donation or view your online donation history.

As you contemplate future contributions, please consider electronic giving. Additional information is available from the Financial Secretary or Treasurer.

Save the date!

*Lutheran Women's
Missionary League*

LWML Spring Gathering

Sunday, April 19

2 to 5 p.m.

at Christ the King-Newtown

*The guest speaker will be
Rev. Walter Harper, pastor at
Immanuel Lutheran-Danbury*



General Memorial Fund

*In memory of David Van Wart
Otto and Mary Atkinson
Joe and Cindy Ciccio
John and Pat Deloge*

Parsonage Renovation Fund

*In memory of Rafael Rodriguez (Sr.)
The Geffert Family*

*In memory of David Van Wart
Cliff and Mary Schrock
Dan and Donna Senft*

ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF

It was a hot time in the old town but Joe Ciccia coolly wins the Grand Ladle

When a chef tells you ahead of time that there's a heat warning with their chili, you've got no one else to blame but yourself if you have a mouth on fire. But how do you avoid the hot ones when you're attending a chili cook-off, where to vote requires everyone to have a taste of everything?!

That was the dilemma 54 "judges" had when they attended the March 7 Chili Cook-Off in the Fellowship Hall; this was the third annual cook-off. There had been 43 people signed up before the event; nine came at the door, and two surprise chili entries came in the evening of the event. The proceeds from this event – just over \$660 – went toward the Parsonage Renovation Fund.

The attendees were more like guinea pigs than judges, since they were tasting entries that weren't well known to them other than what was on the ingredient list outside the pot. The actual judges this year were Sabine Bonnar, the 2014 champion, and guest judge Edward (Raff) Rafferty of Panera Bread in Derby. They awarded first-, second- and third-place prizes while the regular crowd voted to anoint a People's Choice winner.

The 10 entries this year and their main meat ingredient included, in this order on the entry table: Ryan Van Wart (beef, sausage), Michele Vichiola Van Wart (beef), Kendra Norman (lobster), Jim Atkinson (beef, pork), George Hermes (turkey), Mary Ann Schiller (hamburger), Joe Ciccia (beef), Ashley Gomes (beef), Derek Gazda (beef), and Margo Rush (lamb).

After all the taste-testing and voting—which graded the entries on flavor, texture, consistency, blend of spices and aroma/color—the People's Choice Award went to pot No. 9, made by Derek Gazda, who is Valerie Huydic's son-in-law. The judges' awards went to No. 7 Joe Ciccia for First Place, runner-up to No. 8 Ashley Gomes, and finishing third was No. 5 entry, George Hermes.

Mr. Ciccia had to fend off good-natured jokes of a "fix" as the Grand Ladle winner since his wife, Cindy, was event co-coordinator. Mr. Ciccia was also awarded a chef's coat. Mr. Gazda was given an apron; both garments were embroidered with "Chili Cook-Off 2015." The second- and third-place finishers each received a bottle of chili hot sauce.

"Chili Cook-Off," continues on Page 8



At left, Kendra Norman is all smiles as she serves herself a taste of one of the spiciest chillies of 10 selections. Below, left, our two esteemed judges, Edward (Raff) Rafferty and Sabine Bonnar discuss how their taste buds are feeling after trying each chili. Sabine earned her judging rights by being the 2014 "Grand Ladle" winner, and is pictured passing that Grand Ladle onto Joe Ciccia, the 2015 Grand Ladle winner, who proudly wears his prize of a new chef's coat.



“Chili Cook-Off,” continued from Page 7

There were other items on the menu of fare to supplement the chili: mac and cheese by the Schillers, cornbread from Edith Skoog, a cracker, cheese and veggies spread, soft drinks, coffee and water, and cookies. Jim and Lorraine Finch’s recipe for their incredible brownies immediately follows this report.

Cindy Ciccia was thankful for background help by the Schillers, Jim and Lorraine Finch, and her husband Joey as she gave credit to the event crew: her co-chair Lorraine Finch; Mary Ann and Dave Schiller—set-up and breakdown and mac ‘n’ cheese; Edith and Bill Skoog—set-up and delicious cornbread and coffee; Carol and Bob Burns—pre-event work; Mary Schrock—photos, Mary and Cliff Schrock and Kerry Geffert—clean up; Ashley Gomes—check-in.

She added, “Also a shout-out to the Van Wart family. They love this event and we love them! I think they topped nine-plus attending and three chili entries. Wow!

“Sabine and Raff took their job of judging very seriously and both said it was not an easy task. Sabine was excited to pass the Grand Ladle to the new champion. Raff felt very important as an official judge and had so much fun that he has asked to come back again although judges are for one year only. Dominic, our youngest in attendance, went home and said, ‘all the food was like eating turkey on Thanksgiving’ because he couldn’t stay awake once he got home.”

---CLIFF SCHROCK

Holy Cross Word Staff

SHARING A DESSERT RECIPE**Brownies served at the Chili Cook-Off were gooey and delicious and very simple to make**

While many in attendance raved about the different chili offerings, one dessert that was served stood out among the sweets – Raspberry-Flavored Brownies. Jim and Lorraine Finch brought a large batch of these brownies to the March 7 Chili Cook-Off and were happy to share their recipe. Lorraine said this recipe is “pretty fast and easy. Not as good as homemade but pretty darn good for a large crowd.”

“Purchase a box of Ghirardelli Triple Chocolate (Semi-sweet–Milk–Bittersweet) Brownie Mix. We made the entire box (96 brownies), which was purchased at Costco. Mix the batter according to directions and pour into pans. Spoon Smuckers Raspberry Fruit Spread (or you can use jam or preserves) over the prepared batter in dollops, then run a knife through the batter a few times to achieve a marbled effect.



“Bake according to directions on the box, 45 to 50 minutes depending on your oven and the pan size that you use – you want them somewhat gooey. Cool completely!

“Cutting tip: Use a plastic knife and/or a pizza cutter (we learned the hard way).

“Variety Tip: Swirl creamy peanut butter or sweetened cream cheese (thin a little with a bit of cream or milk) in place of the raspberry spread.”

COMMUNITY SUPPER**Serve the Lord by serving the needy a welcome meal; next opportunity is April 7**

“This is what I think of your cooking!” exclaimed an exuberant Community Supper recipient as he carried his *empty* tray past the serving line on March 3. Then he got in the line for a second helping. Snow had started as serving began. Perhaps the inclement weather deterred folks: only 63 meals were served. Galatians 6:10 says, “Whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all.” The following volunteers were filled with zeal, focused on cooking and serving: Anna Mae Berger, Helen Harper, George Hermes, Valerie and Richard Huydic, Jim Leslie, Gail Rice, Nancy Sabol, Diane Hintz Schyhol, Saviden and Brenden T. Semon, Laurie and Joey Vaitkus, as well as the prayers and donations of Holy Cross Lutheran and Grace Lutheran congregants.

Do you have extra grocery store plastic bags? If so, please put them in the Summerfield Collection Box. Panera Bread donates day-old bread to the Community Supper. Plastic bags are needed for the extra bread that can be sent home with those who come to the Tuesday suppers.



As you know, Holy Cross is responsible for buying the food, preparing and serving the meal on the first Tuesday of the month at St. John’s Episcopal. The next community supper for which Holy Cross is responsible for cooking and serving is on Tuesday, April 7. If you can volunteer your time, please put your name on the sheet found on the narthex table.

---DAVID and MARY ANN SCHILLER

THE WRITER WITHIN

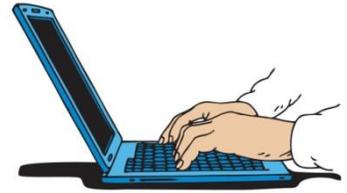
Did you learn anything from the winter weather? It had lessons about our spiritual commitment

It doesn't seem possible, at the end of a long, cold winter, that the weather can teach us anything but how to feel miserable. At least, that's the way it appears at first thought. But below the surface – if you use your imagination – there's more potential for learning from the weather than you might think.

In a rundown of the pros and cons of the seasons, winter cold, wind and snow only teach me the different ways to vent and to lose my patience. The heat and humidity of the summer teach me survival skills on how to avoid damaging rays of the sun...and to lose my patience. For both winter and summer I am taught how to worry that heating and air-conditioning systems will function and so will my car.

Spring teaches me how to cheer up and start feeling good about life. And fall, well that's the best teacher of all, because fall weather not only teaches an appreciation of the outdoors but teaches you on how to feel invigorated.

But back to this last winter since it had something important to teach us, even though the lessons might have eluded us in all the shoveling and shivering. We learned a very important thing about cycles. I don't have any statistics written down to back this up, but the weather was in a cycle that delivered bad conditions every seven days, and sadly, the seventh day hit on Saturday and/or Sunday, maybe Monday.



I know it's an exaggeration, but we seemed to have bad weather on every weekend, forcing our decision makers to contemplate having worship services or not. Think about what that cycle taught us: It's possible to easily fall into the habit of doing something every seven days. If wind patterns can bring a weather event every week, what favorable pattern can we fall in to every seven days all of our own motivation? God asks that we come to church every seventh day to worship. That would be a cycle, officially defined in my Apple laptop dictionary as "a series of events that are regularly repeated in the same order."

As the weather demonstrated, it's not that hard to get into a regular cycle. All you have to do is have the first event in the cycle and get started, then repeat and repeat and repeat.

The weather also has lessons for us in endurance and planning. When conditions are at an extreme—heat and cold, rain and wind—we have to toughen up and get through the elements that bother us the most, having faith that the weather will return to a more comfortable zone. There's no sense complaining about it, just bear with it as best we can and show patience. That's a good lesson to learn for anything we face in life of an extreme, such as the pastoral vacancy we are going through. We needed to be patient and keep our heads, having faith that God will make things normal again, and He has with the acceptance of Pastor Wismar to our call.

As for planning, when the weather messes up our schedule, how we plan around it can lessen the inconvenience as much as possible. The vacancy certainly forced us to plan around a lot of people's schedules and to do a lot of planning for substitute pastors. But it has all worked so far because of thinking ahead.

It is an awesome feeling to be out of the woods with this bad winter. And we can be ecstatic that we are emerging from a pastoral vacancy with the end in sight, a brilliant call candidate who will join us starting May 24 (my birthday, no less!), and Holy Cross holding tough and together.

When we emerge from a tough weather event, we all like to ask each other how we made out. So, how did you make out from this past winter? More importantly, how did you make out from our pastoral vacancy? How did you handle it? Hopefully you endured, you planned, and you stayed in the cycle of worship.

---CLIFF SCHROCK
Holy Cross Word Staff

RELEVANT WORDS FOR TODAY

Four lessons of Good Friday are completed on Easter Sunday

The Rev. James Martin, S.J., author of *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*, writes that Jesus' suffering and death almost 2,000 years ago are very relevant to our 21st-century lives. He says Good Friday teaches us that: 1) Physical and emotional suffering are part of life; 2) Suffering isn't always the result of sin; 3) Jesus was fully human – and thus understands our humanity; and 4) Suffering isn't the last word. "The message of Good Friday is incomplete without Easter," Martin writes. "The story of the Passion is not simply of a man being brutally tortured, nailed to a cross and executed by the Romans. It's the story of a man who turns himself fully over to the Father's will, trusts that something new will come out of this offering and receives the astonishing gift of new life."

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THANKS A BUNCH!

This column recognizes the gifts of time and talent our church members provide to do God's work in our church and community. If you have an item to include in this monthly "thank you" column, please jot it down and put it in the "newsletter" mailbox.

To the Holy Cross members who helped with either shopping, cooking or serving at the March 3 Community Supper at St. John's Episcopal-Bridgeport: **Anna Mae Berger, George Hermes, Valerie and Rich Huydic, Jim Leslie, Gail Rice, Nancy Sabol, David and Mary Ann Schiller, and Laurie and Joey Vaitkus.**



To **Linda Suhr** who consistently serves as our church-office volunteer, helping out one morning a week.

To **Donna Bogen** for coordinating our five Lenten soup suppers. But Donna had plenty of help from her daughters **Sarah and Joanne, Laurie and Joey Vaitkus, Edith and Billie Skoog, Mary Ann and David Schiller, and all those who came to the suppers and helped with the clean-up** each week. Thank you also to **all the cookers and bakers** who provided a pot of soup and/or dessert.

COVENANT TO CARE CORNER

The children will love the creatively-filled and beautifully-decorated Easter baskets

I extend a huge thank you to the people who selected a bunny or egg tag from our Easter Basket poster in March and put together baskets for the 32 children that are currently in the caseload of Holy Cross' "adopted" DCF social worker, Mimose Ulysses Laurenard. Mimose's active caseload has children in it from age 2 up to age 18. And I was so impressed with the fun items that were in so many of the baskets – you all were very creative and generous. The baskets were filled with everything from candy, stuffed animals and books to toys, drawing/coloring items and personal/cosmetic items for the older kids. Special thanks to the following families/individuals who donated baskets: the Anantharaj family, Jim and Kim Atkinson, Doris Bernt, the Bogen family, Tina and Brad Batoh, Bob and Carol Burns, Joe and Cindy Ciccina, Pat and John Deloge, Diane Dietman, the Dixon family, Jim and Lorraine Finch, Kerry and Karen Geffert, the Gomes family, Paul Hagberg, George Hermes, the Hodges family, Valerie and Rich Huydic, Jesse Kravecs, Deb and Jim Leslie, Andrea Meyer, Craig and Jeannie Mones, Kendra Norman, the Rentz family, Gail Rice, the Rodriguez family, Mary and Cliff Schrock, Donna and Dan Senft, and Michele Van Wart. And a special thank you to one of our preschool teachers, Kristen Molinari, who saw that so many tags were on the poster after two weeks and asked if she and her sons could put together a couple baskets. I want you all to know that your generosity to lovingly provide an Easter basket is truly a blessing to these 32 "anonymous" children.



Our next project to support Mimose and the children she serves is the Teddy Bear project, for which we collect teddy bears and wrap them homemade blankets that are provided by the Dorcas Guild and Mission Quilters. Mimose will have these Teddy Bear packs to give to any child upon the unfortunate removal of him/her from the home due to neglect or abuse; it is our hope that this cuddly gift gives the child a feeling of love and belonging to help him/her in the transition to a foster home. Watch for our Teddy Bear poster in late May!

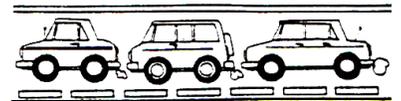
Yours in Christ,
---MARY SCHROCK
Covenant to Care Liaison

BULLETINS FROM ABROAD

If you are away from your Holy Cross family and worship at another church, be sure to drop off the service bulletin in the newsletter box. We received two bulletins over the past couple months from:

Michele Van Wart, who worshiped with her mother at St. Catherine of Siena in Trumbull.

Kerry Geffert, who was out of town on business and worshiped at a midweek Lenten service at Bethany Lutheran in Austin, Texas. Kerry noted that this is the home church of the high school troupe, Sonrise Singers, who shared their program "Moment of Truth" with our congregation in June 2013.



FOUR LETTERS RECEIVED "IN THE MAILBAG"**From the Van Wart Family**

To our friends at Holy Cross,

On behalf of the Van Wart family, thank you for your prayers and support during David Van Wart's illness and his death on February 25. We are so grateful for the time we had with him and for our faith which is the foundation of our lives. We know he is home in glory with God. Your comforting words, hugs, outreach, strength and encouragement meant so much to us. Also many thanks for the donations in Dave's memory. God bless each and every one of you.

---JIM and KIMBERLY ATKINSON and RICK and MICHELE VAN WART

**From Audrey Paray**

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you for your prayers, visits, cards and caring during my recent illness and hospital stay. I am much better and pray that things will stay this way. Special thanks to my children who traveled many miles to care for me. I thank God for you all.

---AUDREY PARAY

**From St. Vincent's Health Services**

Dear Dorcas Guild Members,

We would like to thank you for your contribution of shawls for the St. Vincent's Comfort Shawl Ministry Program. Your donation will become a meaningful gift to our patients and members of our staff who may be experiencing a difficult time.

These presentations of shawls have become moments of deep joy for both presenters and recipients, sometimes in the midst of loss or great sadness. Every time patients or people in need receive a shawl, a prayer is said to remind them that it is meant as a hope for God's love, peace and healing to embrace them. Shawl recipients can feel the special thoughts, hopes and intentions of those who created the beautiful mantles, and they remain wonderful sources of comfort throughout their ordeals and beyond.

Please know that you are truly doing God's work through this project. We hope you continue with this extraordinary participation, and we look forward to continuing to have you as a part of the St. Vincent's family.

May God bless you,

---BILL HOEY

Mission & Ethics Vice President, and the Comfort Shawl Committee

**From Rev. Robert J. Mikulastik and the members of Prince of Peace-Coventry**

(This letter is to thank Holy Cross for its emergency "plate collection" for the Conrad Family, members of Prince of Peace, after they lost their home and all belongings in a house fire in mid-January.)

We received and passed along your generous and gracious gift of the Visa Gift Card to the Conrad family, Garland, Doreen, and daughter Kayleigh (Brosseau) 11 years old.

They are most thankful for the offering of the members of Holy Cross Lutheran-Trumbull and their expression of care and Christ's sharing love. As you know, their loss was devastating and this wonderful gift will help restore, refresh, and renew them.

As we, members of Prince of Peace, get to watch such outpouring of your prayers and grace, we too get to see more of what it means to be part of Christ's church.

Thank you, again.

---REV. ROBERT J. MIKULASTIK, Interim/Temporary Pastor
and Members of Prince of Peace Lutheran-Coventry, Conn.

OUR FLOCK

Christian caring and praying at Holy Cross

This is the Shepherds' Commission's "FYI" column letting our members know for whom we have prayed during our recent worship services. Please continue to remember these people in your prayers.

We remember our members: **Anita Beer**, who broke her hip and is recovering from surgery—prayers for a healthy recovery; **Ron Dietman**, recovering at home from quadruple-bypass surgery, with prayers for a healthy recovery; **JoAnne Meyer**; **Tim Morris**, for continued healing as he recovers from sinus surgery; **Audrey Paray**, prayers for continued healing; **Clinton Peterson**, recovering from surgery, prayers for minimal pain; **Barbara Schneider**, for a complete recovery from her recent surgery; **Anita Schoch**, recovering from heart-valve replacement surgery; **Bob Solaz**; the homebound – **Kay Dubin**, **Emma Fengler**, **George Morris** and **Harvey Pomerenk**.

We prayed for our family and friends: **Gail Agria**, recovering from cancer surgery; **Amy Alfano**, daughter of a friend of Audrey Paray, who has stage 3 ovarian cancer; **Hayley Annino**, friend of Kathryn Struzik, at home following a stem-cell transplant; **Linda Desabella**, friend of Patty Peterson, battling cancer; **Marti Fischer**, cousin of Carol Burns, who is blind and paralyzed; **Kathy Gardner**, Jim Leslie's sister, recovering from cancer surgery; **Kay Geffert**, Kerry's mother, suffering from essential tremors; **Walter Geffert**, brother of Nancy Sabol, recovering from colon surgery; **Abby Haggerty**, 9-year-old student at Christian Heritage School, recovering from successful brain surgery; **Cindy Keegan**, a teacher at Christian Heritage School, going through chemo to treat pancreatic cancer, prayers of thanksgiving that tests have shown that the chemo is working to shrink the tumors; **Mary Koch**, niece of Ron Froehlich, who has finished her chemo treatments; **Ramona Kondracki**, wife of a co-worker of Jim Leslie, who has begun chemotherapy for cancer in her sinus cavity; **Ed Lavin**, friend and neighbor of the Van Wart and Jim Atkinson families, for speedy healing and good health; **Eleanor Lynn**, friend of Effie Solaz, experiencing paralysis following a stroke; **Jean Matthews**, Chris Matthews' mother-in-law, following open heart surgery; and **Elaine McClennan**, friend of the Van Wart family, who fell and broke her hip and is recovering from surgery.



During the past month, we also prayed for these family members and friends: **Janet McGuirk**, mother-in-law of Manfred Schlaich, for a healthy recovery and increased strength following a heart catheterization; **Edgar Meyer**, Don's brother, who has pancreatic cancer and is undergoing chemotherapy; **Joan Meyer**, friend of the Dietmans, in rehab following knee-replacement surgery; **Kylie Middlemass**, Anita Beer's granddaughter, responding well to various therapies as she works through the difficulties of autism; **Gertrude Moran**, friend of Anita Schoch, going through treatments for lymphoma; **Patrick Murphy**, Pat Peterson's brother, diagnosed with liver cancer and recovering from surgery; **Chris O'Brien**, friend of Mary and Otto Atkinson, paralyzed as a result of an accident; **Joseph Parker**, Julianne Nyitrai's father, who underwent triple-bypass surgery; **Luis Rivera**, friend of Doris Bernt, who had a lung transplant; **Ryan Rubega**, grandson of Audrey Paray, recovering from eye surgery he had in early February; **Lois Sanders**, daughter of Ron Froehlich, who had breast cancer surgery and has completed chemo treatments; **Charlotte Schlegel**, best friend of Valerie Huydic, for healing from a staff infection; **Joey Senft**, cousin of the Senft family, with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease); **David Sochacki**, friend of Nancy and Jerry Sabol, following brain surgery; **Lorraine Tamas**, neighbor of the Leslies, who suffered a stroke; **Andy Turnbull**, Scott's brother, in remission from leukemia; **Craig Wilson**, son of a friend of John and Pat Deloge, recovering from tongue cancer surgery; and the anonymous people, including Dawn.

Other prayers were for: Protection for all those serving in the military, including **Michael Collins**; the **family of Amy Witschy** upon the sudden death of her brother, John; **Rev. Ingo Dutzmann and his family** who lost their home and all belongings in an explosion/fire on March 11; a prayer of thanksgiving for **Pastor Eric Wismar's acceptance of our Pastoral Call**; **Good Shepherd Lutheran-New Fairfield** as it prepares for the Call process.

If your friend or family member is on this list, be sure to keep us updated on his or her progress. When you have prayer requests, you can phone the church office at 203-268-4555 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. weekdays or e-mail holyrcss@mindspring.com anytime for prayers to be included in our worship services, and the Shepherds' Commission will include the requests in this monthly report. If you would like to be included in our e-mail Prayer Circle, please provide your name and e-mail address to the church office.

---GARY MESSERSCHMITT
Shepherds' Commission



PRAYER CIRCLE

In need of prayer? Make one of the following contacts to begin the e-mail prayer circle

Our Prayer Circle offers an opportunity to unite in prayer with our Holy Cross family beyond our regular worship services. To request a prayer you may make one of the following contacts:



- Between the hours of 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. weekdays, e-mail or phone the church office: holycrss@mindspring.com or 203-268-4555. Requests received after 2 p.m. (Monday-Friday) will be circulated on the next business day.
- When the office is closed, contact Don Meyer by phone or e-mail: 203-268-2080 or delsmeyer@sbcglobal.net.

---SHEPHERDS' COMMISSION

AN "EGG-STRA" SPECIAL ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Simple facts about Easter Eggs



Although Easter eggs were once part of pagan spring festivals, they've become Christian symbols of new life. A cracked-open shell also represents Jesus' empty tomb on Easter morning.



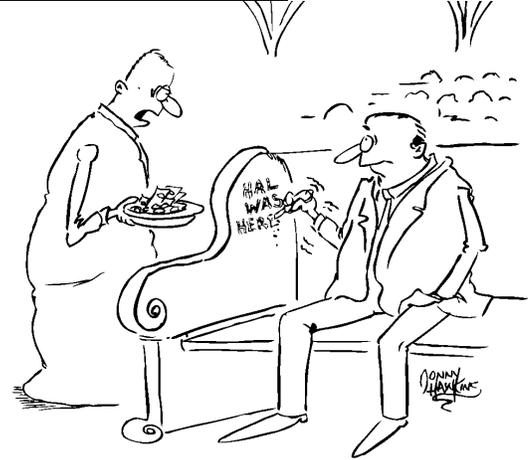
For Lent, some families used to give up eggs and dairy, so they prepared a pancake feast on Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday. They solved the egg surplus by hard-boiling them in various broths, which led to colored eggs.



Each year, the PAAS Dye Co. sells more than 10 million egg-coloring kits, which consumers use to decorate 180 million eggs.

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CHURCH CHUCKLES



"We'd prefer that you fill out your name in our guest ledger."

CELEBRATING APRIL BIRTHDAYS

APRIL 1: NICOLE DELMEDICO
APRIL 2: KARA HEREDIA
APRIL 3: ROBERT KILLIAN
APRIL 4: CATHERINE DIXON
APRIL 5: KAELEN BOIVIE, MICHAEL SCHWEITZER
APRIL 7: JOHN ANANTHARAJ, PAUL HAGBERG
APRIL 8: BOBBY KRAVECS, SCOTT PARAY
APRIL 9: DONNA BOGEN
APRIL 10: DONALD ERICKSON
GORDON JOHNSON
APRIL 11: KELLEY GEFFERT
APRIL 12: TOM DOMANICK, KRISTEN ASMUS
APRIL 13: BRIAN CAMINITI, GARY DiLALLA
APRIL 14: MARION DALE
APRIL 19: KATHERINE BIKE
APRIL 23: ANITA SCHOCH
RICHARD VAN WART



APRIL 24: SHERYL JOHN
GEORGE MORRIS
APRIL 25: JENZY HALLS
GEORGE STROMP
APRIL 26: STEPHANIE DOMANICK
APRIL 28: JENNIFER RENTZ
ALEX SELK
APRIL 29: DAN SENFT