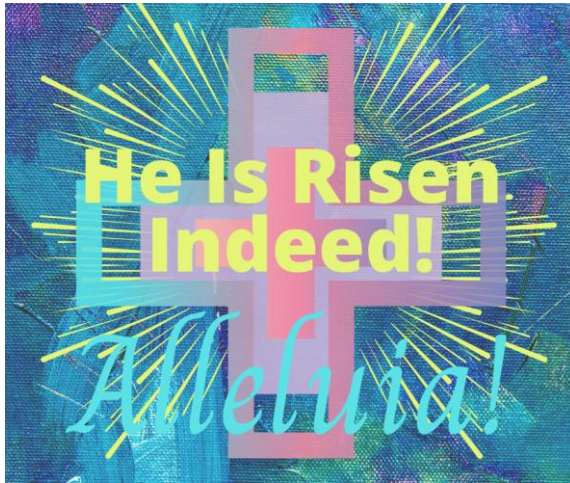




HOLY CROSS
LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Quest

*Transforming the world & ourselves,
together in community,
fellowship and faith.*



April 2023

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JUST A LITTLE *Reminder*

The deadline for inclusion in the May 2023 edition of the Holy Cross Newsletter, Quest, is Monday, April 10th.

Articles can be emailed to the Church Administrator at:
admin@holycrosslutheranchurch.net.

The deadline for inclusion in the Weekly Update
is noon on Tuesdays.

Thank you,
Virginia Muller and Sarah Schulmeyer
Church Administrators

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www.holycrosslutheranchurch.net



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Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Herndon VA

STAFF



Many of us have fond memories of the children's classic character, Winnie the Pooh. My generation of late-Boomers first met Pooh, Christopher Robin, and the other characters that lived in the Hundred Acre Wood through the Disney adaptations on television, only later to discover that they were actually from books! While all the characters are memorable, I want to focus on Piglet, Pooh's best friend.

Piglet, small and quiet, is often overlooked-- that is until he drops some gem of wisdom to counter the general zany dysfunction of the group. He's the balance, the inobtrusive observer that thinks before he speaks; something lacking in almost every other character in the Hundred Acre Woods. The quote in the graphic is among my favorites. The smallest, the shyest, the quietest, he might feel minimized and undervalued, but he knows this: he is grateful.

Piglet noticed that even though he had a very small heart, it could hold a rather large amount of gratitude ~ Winnie the Pooh



Winnie Your Pooh and Tigger

Piglet's wisdom is powerful wisdom. Gratitude is one of the most influential inner tools at our disposal. For example, in 12-Step groups, a person entering for the first time often comes in scared, confused, and defeated. Life has crushed them. They have usually disappointed and hurt many people, especially themselves. They are fragile and on edge. Gently, a group elder will begin the process of mentoring them. One common first assignment is a practice of intentional gratitude. Each day, they are asked to write down one thing for which they are grateful. One thing. At first, it may be simple things: the air, shelter, or food. One thing. Later it blossoms into longer lists with more complex topics: relationships not yet lost, damaged relations beginning to heal, the sense of feeling more whole, or even sobriety itself. That one thing becomes more and more things, and matures into a whole new way of thinking, seeing, feeling, and living. Each day, gratitude now serves as the one thing: the new foundation for every action and relationship, every response and every decision.

Gratitude is a powerful force of transformation and healing and not just for folks in recovery. Our own life may seem small, may feel insignificant, and our voice may seem to be drowned out amidst the bustle of the other characters in the crowd. Piglet serves as that quiet, wise reminder that gratitude is not a measure of comparison with anyone else. Gratitude is being thankful for the gifts we have received, regardless of how small they may seem. Even the seemingly small can be true giants in gratitude.

This Easter season, we will be focusing on a theme of gratitude. We'll have Temple Talks about gratitude and sermons will



emphasize the theme-- a reminder for us all that as Easter people, we are also people of Gratitude. God's grace comes to us wholly, undeservedly, and free without charge to us. The human material necessities are a daily given. Those are pretty major things for which to be grateful. That Easter gratitude is a call to a whole new way of living – seeing the world through Jesus' eyes. We are loved. We are forgiven. We are blessed, and for these we are grateful.

Pastor Martin



Director of Music and Liturgy



This April marks the 15th year with our Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnals. Over the past 15 years we have learned six new liturgical settings while still going back to the familiar ones frequently. Many new hymns have been used in worship, some with new texts to old tunes, and some with both new text and tune.

As we begin to plan for the 60th anniversary of HCLC, I've been going through old bulletins to find different pieces of liturgy. I took time this week to go back and look at the bulletin for our dedication service for these new hymnals. The excitement and energy level of this service made it one of my favorite services and a definite fond memory! The director of music at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Bethesda, MD received a copy of our service and enjoyed it so much that he asked if they could model their service after ours! I thought I'd share the text from the actual dedication of the new hymnals. This text reminds us, through scripture, the many reasons why we sing.

The people of God have sung songs from the beginning of time. We sing in times of ceremony: **"David and all the house of Israel were dancing before the Lord with all their might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals."** (2 Samuel 6:5)

We sing because our God is so great and so good: **"Praise the Lord with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings. Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts."** (Psalm 33:2-3)

We sing in times of celebration: **"Sing aloud to God our strength; shout for joy to the God of Jacob. Raise a song, sound the tambourine, the sweet lyre with the harp. Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon, on our festal day."** (*Psalms 81:1-3*)

We sing because it pleases God: **"Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the faithful. . . For the Lord takes pleasure in his people."** (*Psalms 149:1,4a*)

We sing as an expression of our joy and thanksgiving: **"It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy."** (*Psalms 92:1-4*)

We sing in times of uncertainty and distress: **"I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."** (*Matthew 26:29-30*)

And we sing because it is part of our new life in Christ: **"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God."** (*Colossians 3:16*)



We present these hymnals to the glory of God and for service in the **life of this congregation. We dedicate them to the glory of God and** in honor and loving memory of family, friends, and others for whom we now offer thanks.

Let us pray. Eternal and loving God, We thank you for music and the gift of song through which we offer our praise and thanksgiving, our confessions and petitions, and our sorrows and laments. We give thanks to you for all those who have contributed to this hymnal: the authors, composers, arrangers, and translators who give us the words and music to express the thoughts and emotions that may otherwise have remained silent. We give thanks for the lives and the witness of those in whose honor and memory these hymnals have been given. We pray that these hymnals may be used in worship, in education, in outreach, in evangelism, in nurture, in fellowship, and in faithfulness. We consecrate them, and our lives, to your service, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

During the month of April we begin our seven week long celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the bringing of a new life to our Christian lives. I am very happy that our ELW worship books have been able to bring new life to our worship and pray that they will continue to be a useful tool for lifting our Lord's name in musical praise! I encourage you to pick up a hymnal this Sunday and flip through the pages. Find your favorite hymn and read its lyrics. Then, find a hymn you aren't familiar with and read its lyrics. You might just find a new favorite!



Soli Deo Gloria!

Jeremy Shoop, Director of Music Ministries

Holy Week Services

A banner for Palm Sunday featuring a wooden cross and green palm fronds on a textured, parchment-like background.

PALM SUNDAY

8:30 AM AND 11:00 AM

A banner for Maundy Thursday featuring a close-up of a chalice with red wine, a stack of white bread, and a purple cloth.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

7 PM

A banner for Good Friday featuring a silhouette of a person on a cross against a sunset sky with mountains in the background.

GOOD FRIDAY

7PM

A banner for Easter featuring a wooden cross against a bright blue sky with white clouds.

EASTER

8:30 AM AND 11:00 AM

COUNCIL



Holy Cross Family –

Status Report

I generally wait until after our monthly Council meetings to write these articles to ensure the tone and message are consistent with your overall church leadership. A major item of concern for the Council is the decrease in income so far this year. In January, our expenses were abnormally low, so we essentially broke even; however, in February income dropped another \$2K, and expenses were significantly higher due to the receipt of our quarterly insurance bill which reflected a premium increase, and an unexpected exorbitant bill to repair our fire alarm system. The overall shortfall rose to over \$6K for February. This was covered by our savings so we were able pay all obligations on time; however, continued shortfalls are not sustainable. Our annual operations and designated fund budget is \$464,407 or \$38,700.58 on a monthly basis; in January we brought in \$36,464.02 in combined income and in February we brought in \$31,720.75. As you may recall from our Annual Meeting, the vast majority of costs in our budget are relatively fixed and are primarily driven by providing a building and the personnel which enable us to “be the church” in our community. Frankly, focusing on the income side is our only realistic option.

To that end, we’ve examined the giving patterns at Holy Cross to determine where to focus. While the makeup of the givers in the

top 10% has changed since our analysis of 2018 data, the total has increased by ~11% to an average in excess of \$15K. We hope the trend of replacing top givers with new faces will continue as we inevitably see changes to our membership roster, but the problem evidently is not at the top end. Rather, it appears that many have settled into a habit of giving the same “round amount” every period (e.g. \$10/week, \$20/week, \$100/week, etc.) over the last several years. When this is coupled with online giving, the net amount per gift actually decreases due to the processing fees charged to Holy Cross (it’s rare for someone to uplift their gift to cover them, even though the option is provided in our online giving app). Of those who actually contribute monetarily, the average annual amount given is a little less than \$4,000 with the most common being \$1,000, and the median amount being \$2,000.

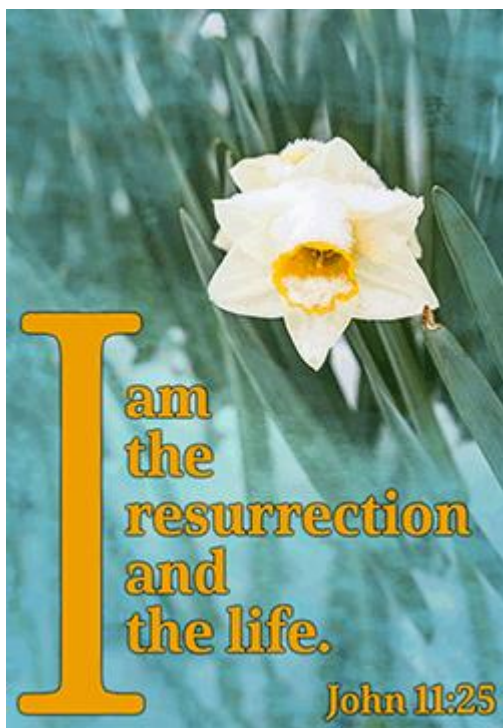


Human behavior is funny; we all like “anchor points” and “round numbers.” Studies have shown that it is remarkably difficult for us to move off our “anchor points.” For many years, the annual Pledge cycle was marginally effective in helping members establish new giving anchor points, but experience shows just how hard resetting the “anchor” is for all of us. It truly takes determined action to reset an anchor; however, we ask that you consider doing so. If you give \$20/week; would you consider \$25? Or \$23? (it doesn’t have to be a “round number!”). A way to rationalize it in your own mind might be the following: If you buy Starbucks on a regular basis, would you consider forgoing one of those trips and adding the amount to your giving? If you’ve gotten out of the habit of giving, would you consider beginning again? It’s easy to go into the Vanco app and enter a recurring donation (please don’t forget to accept the option to uplift to defray processing fees).

I know this is not the usual encouraging message you are used to seeing from me, but I think we all need to be aware of a potentially big problem that is brewing so we can “nip it in the bud!”

I’m heartened by all we are doing to be the church and look forward to seeing what else Christ has in mind for us as we share his love!

Yours in Christ,
Sam



COUNCIL RETREAT SUMMARY

On Saturday, February 25th, the Staff and Council met for their first retreat since Feb 2020. Pastor set the context by sharing a Psalm focused on gratitude and grace for God's creation and His many blessings. Members of the group talked about where they had seen God recently.



We continued our discussion on gratitude and grace by identifying areas where Holy Cross thrives. The list was blessedly long and gave us all a moment to be joyful in the worship, service and fellowship we share at Holy Cross. We flipped the question around, and talked about what the impact would be if Holy Cross didn't exist. It was a sobering moment for us as we recognized the impact Holy Cross makes in our community and the wonderful relationships we share. We talked about where we've been in the last 3 years, the many changes that the Pandemic necessitated, and ways in which we stretched, both in worship and in service to our community. The conversation shifted to where we go next, and do we really know where we are? As our Lenten theme is "Ask" we agreed that the time is right for another survey of our congregation, to ask questions, and to affirm or reset our priorities going forward. We agreed to revisit our Mission Statement, and will launch a team to develop a draft for consideration.

After lunch, we dove into specific things to do in the coming 1-2 years. Everyone contributed their ideas on specific initiatives, actions and ministries we should embrace.

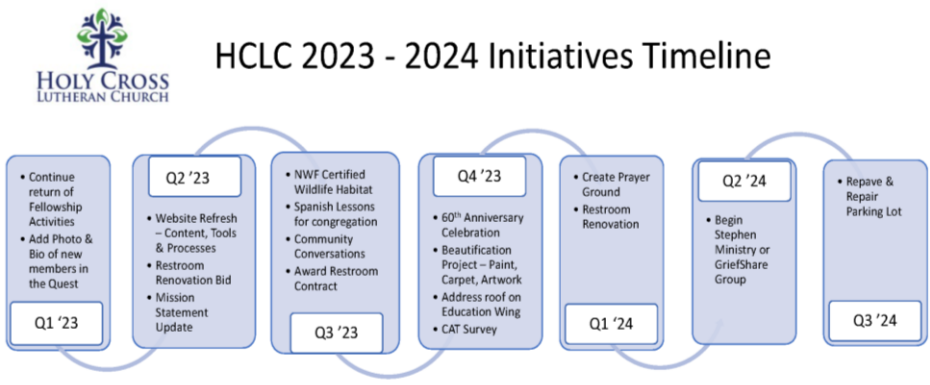


The group voted on the full set of ideas, and identified these 15 to work on:

- Plan and Host 60th Anniversary Celebration for November 2023—Deb Reilly Lead
- New Members – Include a photo and short biography in the Quest to help us connect with new members—Virginia Muller Lead
- Continue return to pre-pandemic fellowship events; for example, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper and monthly congregational lunches—Anne Geiger Lead
- Have property certified as National Wildlife Federation Certified Habitat to foster our care of God’s creation; extend use of garden spaces—Roy Geiger Lead
- Spanish lessons for current members to better connect with our community
- Resume Community Conversations—Deb Reilly/Chris Nelson Leads
- Interior Beautification project, including fresh paint & carpet in the narthex and sanctuary, art work updates throughout. Address roof issues on Education Wing--Gary Wolfe Lead
- Website content refresh, process documentation and possible software change—Sam Carter Lead
- Develop new Mission Statement--Team to be formed
- Build a “Prayer Ground” in the sanctuary—Jeremy Shoop Lead
- Restroom Renovation—Capital Campaign Team
- Parking Lot makeover—Repave & repaint, address drainage to be more environmentally friendly—Gary Wolfe Lead
- Introduce Stephen ministries or GriefShare grief group—Sarah Schulmeyer Lead



The group then discussed the timing for each initiative and mapped them out on a timeline. The Staff and Council then “signed up” for taking lead and/or participating in different initiatives. The high level timeline looks like this:



We need your help to bring these ideas to life! Please reach out to any Council member, initiative lead or the office to learn more or offer your help. We welcome assistance from all ages and abilities. If you are inspired by these ideas, but unable to help right now, please lift the team up in prayer. Your support and encouragement make all things possible.

Respectfully yours,
Deb Reilly



FELLOWSHIP

Easter is April 9th

On Easter Sunday April 9th, stop by the Fellowship Hall and have breakfast with the Holy Cross Choirs between services.



Holy Cross Night Out!!



Our own Jeremy Shoop will be the Pit Orchestra director for Herndon High School's 2023 spring musical, Kiss Me, Kate! Continue to brush

up on your Shakespeare

and put this date on your calendar:

Holy Cross Night at the play, Saturday, April 22, 2023. Time: 7 pm. Cost: \$15. See Anne Geiger for tickets or email her at gei2@verizon.net.



The **April Joke** is from my childhood (and likely yours, too!):

If April showers bring may flowers, then what do may flowers bring?

Pilgrims!

On that note...as always on Sunday, you are invited and encouraged to stop by the Fellowship Hall for some coffee, tea, juice, or water, and good food (there is always fruit!). It's a terrific way to meet up with Holy Cross members and visitors.



Anne Geiger
Fellowship Chair



UPDATE ON OUR DECEMBER BEER AND CAROLS EVENT!

On the next page, please read the sincere note of thanks from Rev. Christopher Otten, on behalf of ELCA Chaplaincies, regarding our donation.

This year's Beer and Carols Event raised \$1770.00 for ELCA Chaplaincies! See how our donation has been put to great use!



Dear Pastor Eldred and Friends at Holy Cross,

Thank you once again for your incredible support of ELCA Chaplaincies! I am grateful to God for you.

Just last week, one of our newest Army Chaplains requested a box of the ELCA's "Prayerbook for the Armed Forces." Chaplain Andrew Lewis wanted that resource for his ministry to our fellow citizens serving this nation in uniform. What a delight to be able to meet the need because of the generous spirit of people at Holy Cross. And as both Michael and I can attest, you have fun doing it! It was special for Michael to send Andrew those prayer books after his participation in Beer and Carols this last December.



In fact, that book was ordered, paid for, and issued to every Chaplain in the Canadian Defense Force by their Chief of Chaplains -- and not just to Lutherans! -- because even our NATO partner recognized what a gift it is to the church-at-large.

Your gift is making an impact! For ELCA Chaplains like Andrew Lewis, to many of our NATO partners around the world, and to our current active military Chaplains who serve across this nation and around the globe, thank you.

May the Holy Spirit bless you as you contribute to the broader mission of sharing God's love in Jesus Christ!

In continuing gratefulness to you, I remain...

Yours in faith and service,
Christopher
The Rev. Christopher L. Otten, Chaplain
Asst to the PB, Federal Chaplaincies
Senior Director, ELCA Chaplaincies
Christian Community and Leadership

OUTREACH



Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County Ceremony

HCLC is one of 18 sponsors of the Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County, which were presented on March 19. The student recognition program was started in Herndon in 2006 by the Herndon Friends Meeting Quaker Church and was opened to all Fairfax County High Schools in 2013. Awardees receive a gift of \$250 plus \$100 for a peace-oriented nonprofit of their choice.

The award is given to one high school junior or senior selected by their school to acknowledge their work to promote peace. Amanda Green from Herndon High School was nominated for developing the school's chapter of Morgan's Message, a national program to facilitate conversations about mental health. Other issues addressed by the awardees were LGBTQ advocacy, child trafficking, educational equity, assistance for refugees, discrimination, and outreach to residents of retirement communities.

The inspirational ceremony highlighted each student's activities and included remarks by Congressman Gerry Connolly, State Delegate Ken Plum and Fairfax County School Board chair Rachna Sizemore Heizer with a keynote address by Amelia Kegan, the Associate General Secretary for Policy and Advocacy, Friends Committee for National Legislation.

 **Volunteers
Needed**

CHURCH CLEAN UP



**Saturday
April 1st!
No Foolin!**

8 am to Noon

OUTDOOR JOBS: RAKE LEAVES, PRUNE BUSHES

*INDOOR JOBS: PAINT, CLEAN CLOSETS,
CHANGE LIGHT BULBS!*



New Altar Lighting!



Out with the old Sanctuary candle... ...and up with the new!

The old candle was in disrepair, and required the Altar Guild to add oil frequently. This required a tedious process of climbing a ladder and carefully lowering the candle in order to add the oil.

This new candle is electric and only requires a new flickering bulb once a year! A big thanks to Bob Thompson for his persistence in ordering, Sam Carter for modifications in the candle, and Carol Shaffer, Nancy Smith, and Sharon Carter from Altar Guild for the placement of the candle.



English Language Learners (ELL) Spring Semester 2023

Our ELL spring semester is in full swing! We are teaching every Wednesday from 7:00-8:30 pm until May. Most of our students come by word of mouth or through both public library systems' publications. We also have several students who found us through Google. We have 34 students from different countries, including Ukraine, India, Togo, Vietnam and central and south America.

We have three classes, beginners, basic and intermediate English. Alejandra and Marcia teach our beginners, Chip teaches our basic class and Suzanne and I teach the intermediate class with Jeanne helping us. At this time Chip is teaching both beginners and our basic students because Alejandra and Marcia are visiting their home country, Bolivia. It's been many years since they saw their families.

We already hear and see improvements in some our students English, this includes their reading and writing skills. It is good to have students from different countries in our classes because it forces them to speak English with each other.

Thank you for always supporting our ELL program.

The ELL Team,
Ellen Atwell, Suzanne Baggett, Jeanne Maysonett, Chip Edwards,
Alejandra and Marcia.

ELL CLASSES GOING STRONG!





We aspire to keep Holy Cross Lutheran Church a thriving, serving community of God's people. We each need to make a determined effort to ensure that our offerings sustain us. Your generosity makes all things possible.

Bring your offering with you to worship service at 8:30 or 11:00 am or to drive-thru communion on the 1st and 3rd Sundays at 12:30 pm. You can also mail a check donation to the church (Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1090 Sterling Road, Herndon, VA 20170)

There are three ways to give when you're not in the sanctuary:

1. To give online, simply go to our secure website and click **"Donate"** to set up an automatic donation plan.
2. Download the free **Vanco Mobile** app. Once it's downloaded, you can use our Invite code, **24A7NT** to ensure you are linked to the correct church, and login with your current Vanco credentials (whether from the GivePlus app or our website's Donation page. If you do not have an account, you will be prompted to set one up. An even easier method of sending a single or recurring check donation to the church is by using Bill Pay with your bank or credit union online account or mobile app. Those payments are guaranteed and are shown in your bank or credit union records. Also, there is no fee to you or to the church.

3. Lastly, you can scan the QR code:



Mask Guidance for HCLC



At the beginning of mask mandates, the Holy Cross Lutheran Church Council voted to follow the guidance of the CDC and local health authorities. Both Loudoun and Fairfax Counties have been determined to have **Low COVID-19 Community Levels** according to CDC guidelines. Accordingly, Council approved relaxing our mask requirement, and masks are now optional at Holy Cross. People may choose to mask at any time. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask. If you are immunocompromised, learn more about [how to protect yourself](#).

What Prevention Steps Should You Take Based on Your COVID-19 Community Level?

Community Burden Levels		
Low	Medium	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines• Get tested if you have symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you are at high risk for severe illness, talk to your healthcare provider about whether you need to wear a mask and take other precautions• Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines• Get tested if you have symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wear a mask indoors in public• Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines• Get tested if you have symptoms• Additional precautions may be needed for people at high risk for severe illness



1090 Sterling Road
Herndon, VA 20170

