
CRISS+CROSS



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December 2017

Working together to connect people to Jesus

Able and Willing

And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.'

- Luke 1:46-49

It was an unplanned pregnancy to an unmarried young woman from a good family. Mary about 2020 years ago, you might guess? Yes, ...but also a teenager from a Lutheran pastor's family in Sanford, Florida just recently.

Can you imagine the conversation? "Dad, Mom, I've got something to tell you...."

Imagine this young teenager's fear before talking with her parents. How would they react? What would they say? And then what would they do? What would she do?

Well, her parents reacted in love. They told her they still loved her, and that she is forgiven, both by God and by them, for Jesus' sake. And they spoke humbly to her in truth. The truth is difficult sometimes, because the truth forces us to deal with situations that we would rather not be in. Dealing with the truth does not mean seeking an easy way out – if there even is such a thing in such circumstances. Together, they confronted the truth in mutual love, forgiveness and support.

Together, daughter and parents spoke to her father's congregation - about 55 souls that Sunday morning - explaining the situation honestly, openly and humbly. And the faithful people of Lutheran Church of the Redeemer loved her, just as Christ loved them. They took out a loan to buy a house for her – and founded a maternity home for her and 7 other unmarried mothers – to deal with the truth of an unplanned baby in love, forgiveness and support. And last weekend, at the conference I attended, Lutheran Christians from across these United States of America embraced them in love and compassion and donated some \$37,000 to support these Christians who are stepping out boldly in faith, hope and love, all because of what a baby born to Mary some 2000 years ago – Jesus - did for her, and for us.

I invite you to re-read these 4 short verses once again, imagining you are hearing them spoken by this young mother. Perhaps you will hear in them something of how Mary felt.

This song of Mary's strengthens our faith in our mighty God. It comforts those who are humble. (And it should humble those who are comfortable.) But Mary didn't sing it just for herself or about herself. She invites us into her song to give glory to God – our God.

The great works that God has done don't comfort you unless you have faith that God is capable of doing them today. And God's great works don't comfort you if you don't believe God is willing to do them **for you**. Believing that He does them for others, but not you, only puts yourself beyond the reach of what God wants to do for you. That's the road to despair. Yet through the ministry, crucifixion and resurrection of the baby born to Mary in Bethlehem, Jesus has already accomplished the greatest work of all – your redemption and mine.

So have no doubts about God's intentions towards you. Believe that He is *able* to do great things for you. Believe that He is *willing* to do great things *for you*, no matter the cost to Himself. That is faith that's alive. That's faith that permeates all aspects of your life and transforms you. That's faith that dares to inhale deeply the truth of an almighty God who loves you – an awesome God who is able and willing to forgive even your biggest sin and transform your defeat into victory through Christ.

May the Son of God, who took on human flesh through Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, keep you in the one true faith this Christmas and forever.

-Pastor Nickel



Heating Season Heating Up: Did you know that HCCC has two furnaces and four thermostats? The church proper has three furnaces and four thermostats. All this equipment helps keep us comfortable, but it also comes with a cost. All the thermostats are programmed to turn on and off to accommodate normally scheduled usage for the area monitored, but of course there will be times we find ourselves using a room outside of the normally programmed times. If you find yourself in this situation, you may adjust the temperature setting on the thermostat; but please do not set them to "hold". Many times over the years we have found a thermostat has been set to "hold" a temperature that will override the normal programming. Once "hold" has been selected, the heating system will maintain that temperature until someone notices and re-sets the thermostat to its "run program" configuration. So, for example, if a "hold" at 70°F is set for the upstairs at HCCC on Sunday afternoon, it may remain at 70°F for the next 6 days! The warmer a space is, the faster it will lose its heat to the outside environment, and the more it will cost the church on our natural gas bill. There is a simple solution. By simply pressing the "arrow up" or "arrow down" buttons, every thermostat's program can be temporarily overwritten to allow a temperature setting different than what is pre-programmed. When the temperature change is made this way the thermostat will return to its original programmed setting in 2 hours. If you find yourself in a space for longer than two hours, you can simply adjust the temperature setting by pressing the arrow button in again to extend this "temporary" setting for an additional two hours. We will be posting "simple" visual instructions, directly adjacent to each thermostat to make it easy. So when you find yourself in a situation where the heat needs to be adjusted please look for and follow the instructions. Thanking everyone for their cooperation,
Your Council



Sunday School News:

Welcome Back to Holy Cross Sunday School! 2017-2018

Get EXCITED for a new year of growing in Christ together with friends and family! We are going to have a great year! So many truths from God's Word to learn, so many friends to hang out with and share our faith with, and lots of fun activities planned along the way! Here's some great events to look forward to throughout the year ahead:

Christmas Crafts/Caroling

Christmas Program

Easter Egg-stravaganza!

VBS – Summer 2018

*more info. to come!

*Parents and Youth please be sure to sign up to help with any of these events as they come up! We are sure to have a great time! Contact Sallye NeGron at



Choir News:

The Holy Cross Choir meets at the church on Tuesday nights at 7pm. If you are interested in joining please contact William Cook, our choir director, at 741-0040. Men's Choir rehearsals will be held on Tuesdays at 8pm. Contact Bill Cook for more information.



Adult Bible Study: Adult Bible Study Sundays at 9:30am. We have begun a 6-part series titled "We the Church: Priesthood of All Believers". All adults are welcome to join us each Sunday in the Narthex at 9:30 am for fellowship within the Word.



Volunteer Opportunity –

Nursery Attendants: We are looking for someone able to watch children during the second service, entertain newborn to three year olds for the full hour of the service, and to lead children up to the age of 7 in activities during the sermon. Red Cross or equivalent Babysitter Training is required for any youthful attendants. Please see any Council member or Pastor Nickel if you are interested in learning more about this volunteer position.



Praise Band News:

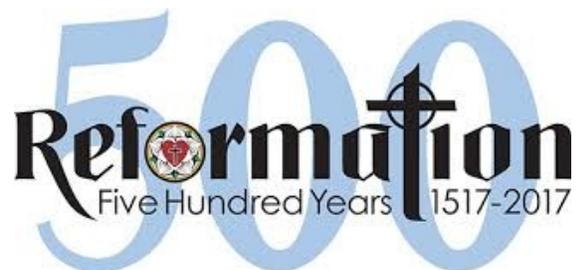
The Praise Band meets Wednesdays at 6:00pm. See Dave Shelton for more



He-Brews Handyman Service: The He-Brew guys are willing to lend you a hand. We would particularly like to help those who are unable to do the work themselves. If you want advice or help around the house or yard ask us. If we can't help we probably have someone who can point you in the right direction. Call the church office (716) 634-2332 or email holycrossclarenc@gmail.com and Lynda or the Pastor will contact us. A handyman will then get back to you to determine the best fit for your needs and when they can come help. There are certain jobs that may be beyond our scope but even if that's the case will be happy to advise you.

Would you like to get in shape? Our Tuesday night exercise class has been a success so far! It is not too late to join us! We meet in Krampitz Hall at 5:30. The cost is \$3 per class (pay as you go) or \$2.50 per class if you prepay for a 6-week session. Wear good shoes and comfortable clothes. Bring a bottle of water, and light hand weights, if you have them. (Some are available for those who don't have their own.) This class is for all ages, abilities; men and women! Come get fit and have fun! For more information, contact Ruth Marzano at themarzanos@gmail.com.

He-Brews: Hebrews will be hosting their annual December Christmas Party on **Dec 21st**. This is a night when we try to raise the bar on the food and beverage as well as basque in the Christmas Spirit. There will be an ugly sweater evening to add a little more fun to the group so dig out that hideous piece of clothing you've packed away or head to the thrift store. Our January meeting will be on **Jan 18th** at the 12 Gates Brewery. We will have a brewery tour as Dave Gardner is friends with the owner. This will be a fun and unique night. A typical gathering starts with fellowship followed by a Christian video presentation and discussion. You do not need to drink beer to join us, other beverages both with and without alcohol are often enjoyed. All are welcome – including neighbors and friends, to come and see serious support given to fellow members and a willingness to help others and our church. He-Brews is open to all men, young and old.



2017 December Voters Meeting: Please plan to attend the 2017 semi-annual Voters Meeting on **Sunday, December 10th** immediately following the second service. All voting members are encouraged to attend. We will review our 2017 performance and accomplishments, and propose our 2018 Operating and Building Budgets. We will also elect our 2018 Council representatives. Most importantly, we will be reviewing and hopefully approving our new mission statement: **"Together in God's Word, we boldly Go to Sow and Grow Christ's Love"**. We hope our mission statement will be the compass needle that we follow when considering where to invest our time, talent and treasures. Anyone interested in serving on the Council is invited to contact any Elder, Council member or Pastor Nickel for more information. Please look for the 2017 review and 2018 proposals to be distributed sometime before the meeting.



Lutheran "3-0" Radio:

Broadcast Schedule and a call for volunteers: Holy Cross will sponsor "Lutheran 3-0" on WXRL 1300 AM from 9:00-9:30am on Sunday, **Dec 24th**. If you would like to help be a part of this ministry as a lay reader, sound or technical person or in any other capacity please see Pastor.

Operation Christmas Child - A big thank you to everyone who packed a shoebox and/or made a monetary donation to Operation Christmas Child. We delivered 110 boxes and several additional donations this week! - Lori Ropach.

Adult Bible Study: The Sunday morning Adult Bible Study is reviewing a series titled "A Man Named Martin Luther - The Movement". It focuses on the events and challenges facing the Church after the Reformation.

Mite Boxes: Our Mites to Lutheran Women's Missionary League totaled \$72.74! Thank you for your contributions. If anyone needs a Mite box, please let me know. Nancy Herdic.

January Criss Cross Deadline

Please submit any items for the Nov Criss Cross **no later than December 18th**. Items may be left on the desk in the HCCC, in the secretary mailbox or may be emailed to holycrossclarence@gmail.com
Thank you!

Crossroads: Please stay tuned for future dates. Crossroads is a month worship time from 5-6pm on Saturday evenings.

Weather Related Closings: As we enter into the winter season in the unlikely event of a weather related closing, Holy Cross' closings and delays will be announced on WGRZ, Channel 2, and online at www.wgrz.com/closings .

Hello Church Family,

Pastor and the Elders would like to update on what happened at the retreat on Saturday 10/28. Holy Cross started this process on June 4th. We followed in July and August with foundational sermons from Pastor and Bible Study in our many ministry groups. 72 out of approximately 150 members completed the Vitality Survey. The responses were extremely strong and exceeded our expectations with about 50% participation and giving us a very strong baseline on 14 attributes of our church. In September, we had 10 small group sessions and 67 people participated, some several times. All this information was critical to understanding who Holy Cross IS and SHOULD BE and set the stage for the retreat. At the retreat, 25 members spent 5 hours with each other and enjoyed lunch and fellowship together. We had fun too and engaged in some excellent discussion on our new draft Mission Statement. During our time together; we heard God's Word, reviewed the results of the Vitality Survey, discussed the feedback from the small focus group discussions and prayed together, thanking God for his blessings on all of us during this process now and during the next steps.

We also heard an important message from Reverend Chris Wicher on the importance of having a mission that Holy Cross will embrace and use as the foundation for everything we do. He challenged us to stay focused; to understand who we are and not try to be something we are not...and remember to balance our missions between internal and external as well, to remember the "empty chair" and that what we do should bring people to Jesus and fill the empty chair we have for them at Holy Cross Clarence.

So how did we come up with the new mission statement? Well, we had some fun doing that by first splitting up into small table groups. We had some time for ice breakers and also were challenged to identify 3-5 unique characteristics or values based on all the survey and focus group data we just reviewed. Each table group then had to come to consensus on 3-5 of those values and report them to the rest of participants. Using sticky notes, each table's 3-5 values were posted on the board and 4 very strong common themes came out of the work from each of the 6 table groups. Reverend Chris Wicher reminded us that a mission statement needs to be clear, concise and useful before leading us through the creation of our draft mission statement. It was amazing to see God working through all of us as the new draft mission statement unfolded before our eyes with loving input from everyone in the room over the course of the last hour of the retreat. In the end, we are very pleased with the result.

Our proposed new mission statement draft is...

"Together in God's Word, we boldly Go to Sow and Grow Christ's Love." What a powerful statement this is for Holy Cross Clarence, knowing that almost everyone in our church provided input, spent personal time to take the survey, open their hearts during the small focus groups and for those who spent 5 hours on Saturday the 28th to thoughtfully resonate on God's word as the foundation, understand the survey results and revel in Holy Cross's values to thoughtfully and carefully craft the new proposed mission statement for all of us to prayerfully consider as we move forward.

So what is next? During November, we are asking you to think about the new proposed mission statement and ask Pastor or the Elders any questions you might have. Make recommendations to any fine tuning of the wording or simply affirm that you are comfortable with it and will embrace and live it. On **December 10th**, we will be asking you to vote on the proposed draft mission statement at the Voters Assembly Meeting. Once the new mission is approved, the fun part will start! We will need your help to review all the many missions we have today and to begin to identify new missions that we may want to start. All these missions should support our newly affirmed Mission Statement. If the small focus groups are an indicator, there will be no shortage of ideas from everyone for all of us to consider.

In Christ's Love; Peter, Francis, Dave, Scott and Pastor Nickel



Care-Ring Circle

To all the Care-Ringers who provide meals for those in need, Thank you! Until you have experienced the love and generosity from our Holy Cross family, you couldn't know how much it is appreciated. If you are interested in volunteering to make a meal for those in need. Please contact Jo Corneck at 741-4311 to be added to the volunteer list or if you are in need of meals.



Visitation Care

If you are or will be hospitalized or homebound and desire Christian care from the Holy Cross staff, please phone the church office at 634-2332 and/or email holycrossclarence@gmail.com to let us know. Please do not assume that we know your situation because for many reasons we often don't. We will do our best to visit you, and if homebound, see that you receive communion.

Christmas Gift Card Orders: As we've done for the past several years, we are selling gift cards through the Great Lakes Scrip program to help fundraise for our youth attending the 2019 National Youth Gathering in Minneapolis. There will be order forms in the Narthex. You simply mark off the cards you want to purchase (either for gift giving or for your own personal use) and you pay Holy Cross the face value of those gift cards. Holy Cross earns the rebate amount on the face value of the cards you purchase. There is tremendous potential in this program the more gift cards we sell. So please consider asking friends and family to participate as well. ***This year, all orders are due by Sunday, Dec. 10. They will be processed and cards delivered back to you by the following Sunday, Dec. 17.*** If you have any questions, please contact Andrea Wiepert at thewieperets@gmail.com.



Women's Bible Study Group

The Women's Bible Study meets on Tuesdays, at 9:30am in the Holy Cross Christian Center (HCCC). New Members are always welcome! We are currently studying the book of Isaiah. We begin our social time at 9:30am with a study begin time of 9:45- to conclude about 11am. We do not meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month. We are lay led, participants volunteer each week to facilitate a particular lesson. We also volunteer to bring "goodies" from our kitchens to go with our coffee. Remember, it is always good to begin the day in God's word!

December Servants

Dec Communion Assistants: Jo Corneck & Robert Hamp Peter Olsen & Robert Diem
Dec Ushers: Ronald Talboys & Kelly Roeser Russell Ponivas & Doug Hartley
Dec Altar Guild: Connie Donnelly & Karen Langiewicz

Lay Readers Dec 3: Sarah Craig Sue Tichy
Acolytes Dec 3: Morgan Chalmers Maisie Standish
AV Team Dec 3: Christopher Diem
Nursery Dec 3: Emily Hare

Lay Readers Dec 10: Kurt Wozniak Mary Ann Schettler
Acolytes Dec 10: Alexis Grek Leah Roberts
AV Team Dec 10: Bill Cook
Nursery Dec 10: Allie NeGron

Wednesday Evening Advent Service December 13th

Usher Dec 13th

TBD

Lay Reader Dec 13th

TBD

Acolyte Dec 13th

TBD

Acolytes Dec 17: Nathan Grek Madelyn Standish & Emily Hare
AV Team Dec 17: Scott Brooks
Nursery Dec 17: the Olsens

Lay Readers Dec 24: Jo Corneck Brian Humphreys

Acolytes Dec 24:

TBD

AV Team Dec 24: Madeline Olsen

Nursery Dec 24:

Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols December 24th

Ushers 4pm

Ushers 7pm

Ushers 10pm

[To volunteer, contact Paul Donnelly]

Acolytes 4pm

Acolytes 7pm

Acolytes 10pm

[To volunteer, contact Peter Olsen]

Lay Reader 4pm

Lay Reader 7pm Marilynn Cook

Lay Reader 10pm Marilynn Cook

[To volunteer, contact Nancy Cote']

December Servants Continued

Lay Readers Dec 25: Joe Hughes (also
Communion Assistant)

Acolytes Dec 25:

AV Team Dec 25:

Nursery Dec 25:

Lay Readers Dec 31: Ann Craig & Wendy
Shelton

Acolytes Dec 31:

AV Team Dec 31: Larry NeGron

Nursery Dec 31:

Clarence Community Pantry: Thank you for
your continued support of the Clarence
Community Pantry! Urgent food needs this
month are tuna, spaghetti and soup. See
Nancy Herdic for more information or bring your
donations to the Krampitz Fellowship Hall.

Christmas is Coming!! and we still have
room for you! If you have a love for working with
Children and enjoy helping them to have fun and
make special memories.... We need you!
Whether your gift is organizing, costume
creation, singing, directing, etc. This year's
Children's Christmas Program is currently set to
be on Sunday, **December 17th**. We will have
practices on the two Sunday's prior to that (Dec.
3rd and Dec. 10th) during our Sunday School
hour of 9:30-10:30. This is always such an extra
special time full of wonderful memories! I just
know you will want to be a part of it! Please
contact me sallye.negron@gmail.com or sign up
in the Narthex as soon as possible!



December Birthdays

Kylie Zubrzycki 12/1

John Brunner 12/2

Jill Carl 12/4

PJ Donnelly 12/5

Matthew Wiepert 12/5

Lilly Zubrzycki 12/5

Gordon Compo 12/9

Diana Overton 12/10

Nathan Grek 12/11

Clara Weber 12/11

Chuck Fiegl 12/13

Elizabeth Handley 12/15

Vincent Pionessa 12/15

Alex Hartley 12/16

Jennifer Dulaney 12/17

Aidyn Collins 12/20

Natalie Nickel 12/21

Charlie Wood 12/21

Marlene Hiemenz 12/25

Michael Kowarko 12/27

Nancy Cote' 12/30



Advent and Christmas Season Schedule

Wednesday Evening Advent Services

Dec 6th St. Luke's Lutheran Church Cheektowaga

Dec 13th Holy Cross Lutheran Church Clarence

December 20th Lutheran Church of Our Savior Buffalo

6:00pm Soup Dinner, 7:15pm Hymn Sing, 7:30pm Service

Sunday December 17th Children's Program -one service at 10:00am

Sunday December 24th Worship Services at 8:00am and 11:00am

Sunday December 24th Evening Lessons and Carols 4:00pm, 7:00pm, &
10:00pm

Monday December 25th Christmas Day Service 10:00am

Christmas Program Practice Schedule

Sunday December 3rd -Program rehearsal during Sunday School hour

Sunday December 10th-Program rehearsal during Sunday School hour

Sunday December 17th-Children's Christmas Program. One Service 10:00am

** Children should arrive by 9:15am in Krampitz Hall*

to get into costume and for final instructions

