
CRISS+CROSS



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Working together to connect people to Jesus

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

[Jesus] put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make their nests in its branches." - Matthew 13:31-32

What point does Jesus make in His brief parable of the mustard seed?

As you know, this summer I was blessed to visit Israel on a study tour with my daughter, Laura. One day near Bethlehem we saw an actual mustard tree (about 10 feet tall). Our guide opened a pod of mustard seed grains to show us how small they are - about 1/4th the size of a pinhead.

Jesus gave the tangible example of the mustard seed to explain how God's kingdom grows imperceptibly until it is complete and beneficial for its intended, created purpose. One might say this reveals the "NOW", the "NOT YET" and the "LAST DAY" characteristics of God's kingdom. It's "now" in the sense that Jesus already inaugurated the coming of His kingdom by His ministry and His suffering, death, resurrection and ascension. It's "not yet" in the sense that we persist in the time of the Church - we are given the opportunity to participate in God's plan of salvation - while we await Christ's return. And it's all coming to full fruition on the "Last Day" when Christ returns to judge the living and the dead.

Jesus' reference to the "Seed" continues a Gospel theme started in Genesis 3:14 ("the seed of the woman" will crush the head of the Tempter), 2nd Samuel 7:12 ("and I will raise your [King David's] seed...and establish His kingdom"), Luke 8:11 (in the Parable of the Sower, "the seed is the Word [of God]"), John 12:24 ("unless a seed of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit") all pointing to the incarnation, ministry, death and resurrection of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Likewise, Ezekiel 17:23 compares the coming Messiah's rule to a great tree in whose shade "birds of every sort will nest."

Jesus parable applies to us, first individually, as the Holy Spirit plants a seed of faith, as at Baptism, and grows it throughout the life of a Christian life as He nurtures it by Word and the Lord's Supper. Secondly, this parable applies to all believers collectively as the Church, which began with just the seed of Jesus, grew to include His apostles, then Jerusalem, then Judea and Samaria, and eventually more and more of the whole world. It includes us, together, as part of His Church, here in Western New York today.

God's kingdom starts small, like a mustard seed. God grows it invisibly, tiny bit by tiny bit, until it is complete and beneficial to its intended, created purpose. One purpose is to create saving faith in Christ in the life of an individual. And like the branches of a mustard tree providing nesting places for birds, the Church provides a home for all the peoples of the world. We thank God that He's given us a place in it through our Lord Jesus Christ.

-Pastor Nickel



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.



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 themarzos@gmail.com.



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:

Fall Festival/Pumpkin Party

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 Negron5@roadrunner.com



Rally Day 2017:

Next Sunday, September 10th we will be having a church-wide Rally

Day **Pancake Breakfast** in Krampitz Hall to celebrate a new year of learning in Christ! Volunteers will begin cooking and setting up during the first (8:00) service and pancakes will be served during the Sunday School hour beginning at 9:30! Families can gather, eat and then walk over to HCCC to visit SS classes and get a special gift from teachers. Confirmation students can also pick up curriculum info. etc. We will wrap things up by 10:30 in time for the second service at 11:00! Thank you to all who have graciously offered to help cook, serve and bring items for the breakfast!



Choir News:

The Holy Cross Choir will resume in the fall. We meet 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.

Lay Leadership Seminar: Holy Cross will be hosting an interactive training for lay readers in congregations **next Sunday, September 10th** from 2:00-5:30pm. You do NOT need to currently be in a leadership position to participate! All are welcome. The cost is \$49 per person. The seminar is presented by Ambassadors of Reconciliation. See Pastor Nickel for details.



Adult Bible Study: Adult Bible Study will begin again on **Sunday, September 17**. The first session will be a Small Group Reflection Meeting, led by 2 elders, as part of our congregational reflection within the visioning process. On September 24 we will begin 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.



Praise Band News:

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



NEW! 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

A Call For Cookies: It is Holy Cross' turn to provide dessert for the meeting of the Niagara Lutheran Health System Guild on Thursday **Sept 21st** at 11:30am and Greenfields Manor on Broadway in Lancaster, NY. Pastor Nickel will be doing the opening devotion and program. We will meet in the church parking lot and car pool to the meeting. If you can bake some cookies please sign the sheet in the Narthex and bring them with you to the meeting or to church on September 17th labeled for the NLHS Guild meeting. About 80 people attend from our sister churches so we will need several dozen. The facility will put them on plates. Thank you for your help! Reservations are required for lunch. Please sign the sheet on the table in the Narthex so I can make reservations.

He-Brews

NEXT Meeting Thursday September 21st 7:30pm

He-Brews generally meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month, usually at 7:30 pm; at a member home or at a local restaurant. Watch the weekly announcements for the location. We do not stay out late as most have to work in the morning. 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.

Dash's Receipts Update!

Thank You Holy Cross! We collected another \$8000 in Dash's receipts which gives us a check for \$200 for Hearts for the Homeless new vehicle. Every little bit counts, please keep those receipts coming and thanks to Lorraine Woodman for tallying them up. Jill Carl.

UPDATE: Where Are We Now in the Visioning Process?

- Step 1 Introduction - COMPLETE
Step 2 Building Our Foundation on Christ's Word –Ongoing
Step 3 Understanding Ourselves and Our Strengths –Underway Now!

**Please complete the Congregational Survey by SEPTEMBER 10th
Online at www.lcms.org/survey/revitality
Congregation code C174675**

Step 4 Small group reflection meetings (please participate in one):
Saturday, September 9, 9:00am (family breakfast)
Sunday, September 17, 9:30am (adult bible class)
Tuesday, September 19, 9:30am (women's bible class)
Wednesday, September 20, 7:00pm (evening bible study)

Thursday, September 21, 7:30pm (He-Brews men's group)
Sunday, September 24, 9:15am and 12:15pm (post-services)

Step 5 Join us at the Congregational Retreat at Pioneer Camp on
Saturday, October 28th to

- crystallize our current strengths
- identify 3-5 key values of our congregation
- draft a mission statement that applies specifically to Holy Cross

Step 6 Visioning Meetings in November/December – where the Lord's
leading us

Step 7 Go and Serve the Lord!

**October Criss Cross
Deadline**

Please submit any items for the June Criss Cross **no later than September 12th.**

Items may be left on the desk in the HCCC or in the secretary mailbox or may be emailed to holycrossclarence@gmail.com



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 September 3rd, and Sunday October 1st. 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.



Hurricane Harvey How Can I Help? Please pray for patience, wisdom, safety and courage for the victims and rescue/recovery workers. If you wish to donate to relief efforts please consider:

1. Simply mark on your envelope any additional offering for "Hurricane Harvey"
2. Contribute to the plate offering in the Narthex September 3rd or September 10th.
3. Donate to LCMS World Relief and Human Care at lcms.org/harvey
4. Text 41444 and type LCMSSHARVEY in the message field.

**Our next Crossroads will be
Saturday September 23rd
from 5-6pm. All are welcome!**

Installation Of Samantha Brown:

Samantha's installation as Director of Christian Education at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Saginaw, Michigan will be at their 10:30 am service on Sunday, **September 10th**, followed by a church picnic to welcome her. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church is located at 5335 Brockway Road, Saginaw, Michigan 48638-4423 if anyone would like to go or send a card. Please pray that Samantha's ministry and service at Good Shepherd will be blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ.

New Collection for Hearts for the Homeless: Beginning **September 3rd** we will be having a juice box collection. "Hearts" gives juice boxes every time they deliver meals so it is an ongoing need. A collection box will be available. Thank you for your generous support for Hearts for the Homeless! Any questions? See Jill Carl.



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.



Women's Bible Study Group

The Women's Bible Study will resume our study of Isaiah this Tuesday **September 5th**. We meet on Tuesdays, at 9:30am in the Holy Cross Christian Center (HCCC). We begin our social time at 9:30am with a study begin time of 9:45- to conclude about 11am. 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!



Heritage Home: We enjoy working through the Bible creation stories in Genesis 1, "God Creates Land, Water, Plants" and then "Living Creatures." The residents have a lovely patio on the east side of the house where they can enjoy God's nature more fully. It is good to be with them over the summer months. Join us! -Ron, Alfrieda, Margaret

September Servants

Sept Communion Assistants:	Kenny Grek & Joe Hughes	Peter Olsen & Paula Cocco
Sept Ushers:	Michael Zubrzycki & Scott Kelkenberg	Russell Ponivas & Doug Hartley
Sept Altar Guild:		Helen Grinstead & Debbie Hamp
Lay Readers Sept 3:	Jeff Allan	Kristy Long
Acolytes Sept 3:	Alexis Grek	Leah Roberts
AV Team Sept 3:		Madeline Olsen
Lay Readers Sept 10:	Kenny Grek	Paula Cocco
Acolytes Sept 10:	Christy Wood	Julia & Lily Scarantine
AV Team Sept 10:		Larry NeGron
Lay Readers Sept 17:	Kurt Wozniak	Nancy Cote'
Acolytes Sept 17:	Nathan Grek	Helene Olsen & Aidyn Collins
AV Team Sept 17:		Matthew Wiepert
Lay Readers Sept 24:	Joe Hughes	Gail Andrees
Acolytes Sept 24:	Lindsey Chalmers	David Hare & Tyler Standish
AV Team Sept 24:		Christopher Diem

Thank you for serving!

ATTENTION MARRIED COUPLES: Have you signed up for your fall Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend? Both of our spring Weekends had waiting lists, so sign up now for a fall Weekend to avoid disappointment! Couples overwhelmingly report that the Weekend is the best thing they have ever done for their marriage.

The fall Weekends are:

September 15-17, 2017 at Spruce Lake Retreat Center, Canadensis, PA, a new hotel-style facility on Spruce Lake in the heart of the Pocono Mountains – an hour north of Allentown.

October 6-8, 2017 at the Black Swan Inn in Lee, Massachusetts. Nestled in the foothills of the Berkshire Mountains, a hidden gem overlooking Laurel Lake – an hour north of Hartford, CT.

Two nights lodging, 5 meals for each of you, and all supplies are included with your \$100 per couple registration fee, plus toward the end of the weekend you will be given an opportunity to make a confidential contribution of whatever amount you wish toward the continuation of the program.

Registrations are limited, so sign up today by going to the website: www.GodLovesMarriage.org and paying the registration with your credit card, or marking the option to mail a check. For questions, or if you would like a brochure with registration form mailed to you, contact Northeast US Directors of Lutheran Marriage Encounter, Fred & Julie Schamber, at fjschamber@comcast.net or 724-325-3166.

Lutheran Emergency Response Team

Training: On October 7th the Lutheran Church's Eastern District will be offering for the first time in the Buffalo area, Emergency Response Team training. Those who complete the one day class of about 5 hours will receive a FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) identification card. This allows that person to work with first responders at any disaster, big or small. The Eastern District has an abundance of talented people, who with their myriad of God given skills can prove to be the loving hand of God to a stranger who has been through a disaster or tragic loss. We always pray to be spared any disaster, but being prepared to help locally or outside of upstate New York our help would be a blessing to those who are hurting. The training, which costs \$20, will be provided by Pastor Kristian Bjornstad and will be held at Grace Lutheran Church, 736 Cayuga Dr., Niagara Falls, NY 14304. For more information, or to sign up with the Holy Cross contingent, contact Tom Marzano at 741-3382 or by e-mail atthemarzanos@gmail.com. You can also check out the Synod's website for more information at: <https://www.lcms.org/disaster> Thanks for considering this new way to serve!



September Anniversaries

Brian & Lori Ropach Sept 4th
Richard & Donna Meka Sept 8th
Larry & Andrea Wiepert Sept 14th
David and Katherine Chalmers Sept 21st
Robert & Dolores Pellnat Sept 21st
Duane & Laura Connors Sept 30th



September Birthdays

Ronald Braunscheidel 9/1
Katherine Chalmers 9/1
Andrea Wiepert 9/1
Scott Zachau 9/1
Nancy Herdic 9/4
Jim Ludwig 9/5
Mary Sue Tichy 9/5
Sue Fay Allen 9/7
Nicholas Langiewicz 9/6
Kelly Leipold 9/8
Justin Rayner 9/11
George Schettler 9/11
Laura Scarantine 9/12
Robert Platt 9/13
Ray Pionessa 9/15
Morton Muchow 9/17
Carol Harrison 9/19
Connie Donnelly 9/20
Grace Ludwig 9/21
Ryan Ludwig 9/23
Michael Shelton 9/24
Emma Scarantine 9/25
Kristen Cocco 9/26
Henry Eckertson 9/27
Michael Tomaino 9/28
Patricia Ludwig 9/29
Madison West 9/30