



The HOLY CROSS WORD

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

FEBRUARY 2022

"Share the Hope"

VOL. LXV, NO. 3

HEAD TO THE HEART

Scrapbooking for Jesus

During Sunday morning Bible study we normally take a look at the readings that are assigned for that Sunday and pay special attention to the passages that I'm not focusing on for the sermon. A few weeks ago we were in 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, which talks about the spiritual gifts God gives to the church.

"⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ¹¹All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills."



A spiritual gift
is **given** to each
of us so **we** can
help each other.

What's important to note here is that God is the one who gives the gifts, according to His will, and these gifts are used in service to others, for the common good. If we think about spiritual gifts in this way, we can see that God can use all kinds of gifts, acts of service, activities, hobbies, skills, etc. for the purpose of His will – which is that all people come to know Him and His love for them.

"What about scrapbooking?" someone asked in class. "Is my love for scrapbooking a spiritual gift?" I've never seen the word or heard a parable about scrapbooking in the Bible. But the Bible says that all good gifts are given by God – and scrapbooking can be a way to connect with others, share an important memory, and communicate thanksgiving for what God has done. A scrapbook is created to be a lasting memory of a moment in our lives; a moment when God was with us – whether they were good times or bad – but nonetheless a moment when we either rejoiced at His goodness, leaned on His grace, or cried out for mercy. In other words, a scrapbooker can lead us to God's grace through their gift.

Yes, scrapbooking can be a spiritual gift, as well as your gift of photography, gardening, teaching, cleaning toilets, singing, poetry, organizing, and the list goes on. The next step is to think intentionally about how those gifts can demonstrate your love in service to your neighbor.

As we were discussing all this, the hymn *Hark, the Voice of Jesus Crying* popped into my head. Here are a few lines from verses 2 and 4: "If you cannot speak like angels, If you cannot preach like Paul, You can tell the love of Jesus, You can say He died for all." "You can lead the little children to the Savior's waiting arms." "Let none hear you idly saying, 'There is nothing I can do.'" "Take the task He gives you gladly, Let His work your pleasure be; Answer quickly when He calleth, 'Here am I, send me, send me!'"

Looking forward to seeing how God will call you to use your gifts this year!

Pastor Nathan Erb

Pastor Nathan Erb



Wednesdays—February 2 through February 16

7:15 p.m. – “Looking at Jesus” six-week Bible Study continues
In person at Holy Cross or virtual via e-mailed link

Thursday, February 10

7:00 p.m. – Board of Directors’ meeting

Monday, February 14 – Valentine’s Day

Monday, February 21 – Presidents’ Day

Wednesday, March 2 – Ash Wednesday

7:00 p.m. – Worship Service with imposition of ashes

Wednesdays, March 9, 16, 23, 30, April 6

7:00 p.m. – Lent Midweek Worship



HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH—LCMS

Sunday Worship Service: 10:00 a.m.

Adult Bible Class precedes Sunday Worship at 9:00 a.m.

5995 Main Street, Trumbull, CT 06611

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Church Office: 203-268-4555; **Church Office e-mail:** office@holycrosstrumbull.com

Website: www.holycrosstrumbull.org

Christian Preschool: 203-268-6471 **e-mail:** preschool@holycrosstrumbull.com

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Holy Cross congregation is to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord (Matt. 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.



PRESIDENTIAL WORDS

By President Harry S. Truman

“It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.”

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NEWSLETTER NOTES

Our next deadline is...

The next issue of The Holy Cross Word is the March edition. The deadline for articles is

Tuesday,
February 15.

Please plan ahead to publicize events or share news with your fellow Holy Cross members.

You can submit articles to the newsletter mailbox (outside the church office) or send them via e-mail to:



office@holycrosstrumbull.com.

A NOTE FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Giving statements prepared, distributed electronically and in paper form

Year-end statements for 2021 were distributed in early January. For those members with an e-mail address on file, your statement was sent via e-mail on January 2. For those with no e-mail on file, your statement was mailed on January 6. If you did not receive your statement and/or have questions about your statement, please contact me at financialsecretary@holycrosstrumbull.com.

---CHAD HELMINGER

Financial Secretary



HOLY CROSS CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

Chapel time, rhymes and silly songs, Valentines, writing and math concepts fill February days

February will find us exploring good nutrition and healthy habits. The children will also be busy making Valentines for all their friends. We will celebrate Valentine's Day with a special ice cream sundae party!

Our Language and Literacy activities will focus on Nursery Rhymes and rhyming activities. We will sing silly songs that help us learn what it means to rhyme. The 4-year-old class will begin a special writing program that mirrors that of the Trumbull Public Schools, and will also explore the concept of addition and subtraction. This is done through hands-on experiences with manipulatives, felt boards, songs and poems. The children will also practice their graphing skills using candy conversation hearts.



Our Bible stories will focus on how Jesus is our good friend. The stories include "Jesus Blesses the Children," "Mary and Martha," "Jesus Forgives Zacchaeus" and "The Ten Lepers." Thursdays are our favorite days because it is our chapel day with Pastor Erb! He always gives us a chance to participate in the reading of the Bible stories with fun actions! He also teaches us a new song every week!

We are now accepting registration for the 2022-2023 school year. Our school offers both full-time and part-time options. Class sizes are limited so register early! Please contact me for a registration form or to set up a tour of the school at preschool@holycrosstrumbull.com or 203-268-6471.

In Jesus' Name,

---MICHELE GLENNON

Preschool Director

CELEBRATING FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Feb. 2: Joe Ciccia | Feb. 13: Alyssa (Cerone) Jenkins |
| Feb. 3: David Skoog | Mary Ann Schiller |
| Feb. 4: Thomasina Petrahai | Feb. 14: Julianne Nyitrai |
| Feb. 5: Jennifer Deloge | Feb. 15: Thomas Ferik |
| Feb. 9: Alexander Carola | Feb. 22: Ann Brueggemann |
| Feb. 11: Peter Antoniou | Feb. 24: Luke Riccio |
| Kevin Halls | Feb. 27: Jack Messerschmitt |
| Feb. 12: Ethan Gagliardi | Feb. 28: Chad Helminger |
| William Schipul | Emily Rentz |
| | Feb. 29: Jesse Kravecs |



EVANGELISM AND YOU

Monthly director's report on things to know and even things to do

"Time keeps on slippin', slippin', slippin', into the future." – Steve Miller

Time sometimes feels like it's doing more than just slipping into the future, it feels like it's flying into the future. Here we are in the February newsletter and it seems like we just celebrated Christmas a week ago.

If you're like me, time seems like it can go double time. I feel a great urgency at times when it comes to things I'm responsible for, such as the Evangelism Commission. Perhaps it's because when you're doing God's work, you feel how important it is and you want to make sure everything is a success. I would encourage all of our church members to feel the weight of what it is to be a Christian in that we have a duty to be involved with our church and help it grow. If you are inactive or have felt comfortable for many years letting others do the tasks to keep Holy Cross functioning, may you feel a sense of urgency to meet **a goal of being involved in one extra thing this year for your church that you haven't done before.**



As we get into this new year, I'm hopeful time will be kind to us, though, and slow down, allowing us to get plans figured out and executed of all we want to accomplish. The Evangelism Commission this year hopes to make inroads into how social media can help Holy Cross better publicize all of the things that make Holy Cross an attractive house of worship and learning for faith in God. The commission had its first meeting at the start of January and plans on delving into how Christians can show their faith as witnesses to the Good News, publicize the church and our pastor.

Our first meeting since I was appointed director last September, done virtually, confirmed that the group of Doris Bernt, DJ Broadbin, Tina Curto, and Elisabeth Erb will have many good ideas, comments and observations as commission members. As we go down the road of adapting the commission's duties of publicity for a "new world" out there—newspaper display ads and paid listings and Yellow Page ads no longer are the norm—the commission will focus on how we can tell the Holy Cross story to our present members and prospective ones through social media and all its various networks.

As that goes on, mainstay tasks of the commission—the greeter program, display case, tracts, etcetera—are continuing in full vigor. My thanks to commission member Elisabeth for adapting the beautiful Christmas display case theme following what she did for Advent. A reminder that anyone with the church is welcome to become a greeter or offer to help with a narthex display case theme. Just contact me if you are interested.

Lastly, this **month's featured tracts** in the narthex are: Look for tracts that help you understand about addictions, such as gambling.

---CLIFF SCHROCK

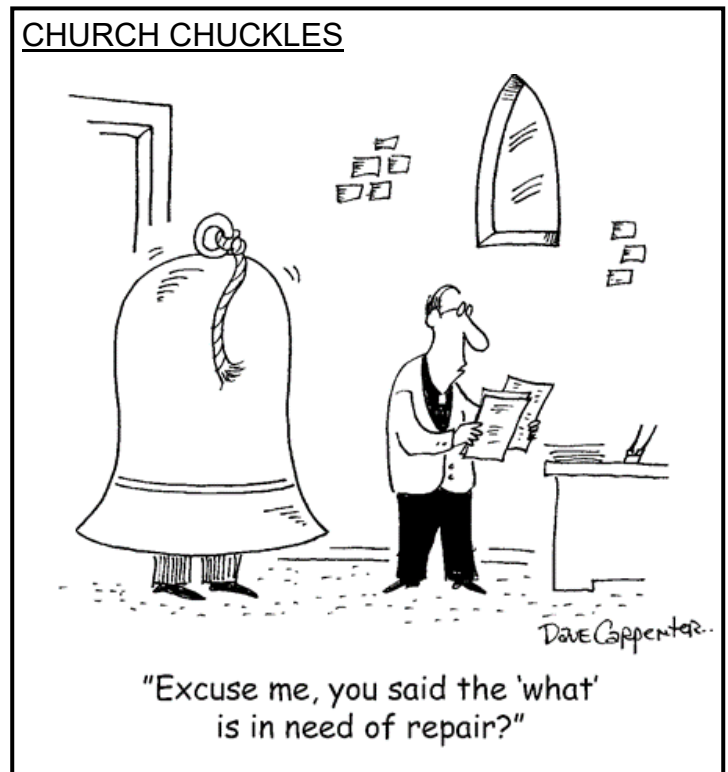


A WORKOUT FOR YOUR HEART

Words by John Holmes, poet and professor of literature/modern poetry at Tufts University

"There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up."

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LEARN FROM & BE INSPIRED BY SCRIPTURE

The Holy Cross Word monthly “Bible study on paper”: Acts, Chapter 10



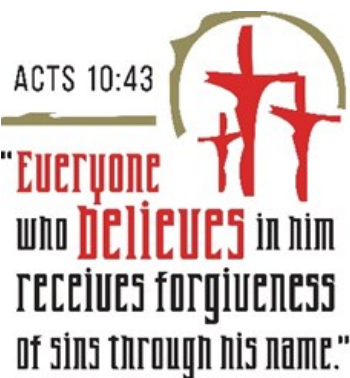
Acts, Chapter 10, 48 verses—This chapter continues to look at how persecution of the church caused it to scatter and spread. Its focus is on Peter and his interaction with and conversion of Cornelius. One commentary noted, “The conversion of Cornelius is of pivotal importance because it set the precedent for the admission of Gentiles into the church in total disregard of Old Testament legislation.” Please pause now to read the full Chapter 10 of Acts (use an aid such as BibleGateway.com if needed).

Chapter 10 analysis—

Chapter 9 had told the dramatic story of Saul’s transformation from a tormentor of Christ’s followers to leader of them. It is certainly one of the most dramatic personal revelations in the history of mankind and serves to teach us that everyone, no matter how far they have gone to the side of evil, can be reclaimed. What great hope to embrace! The chapter concluded with Saul evading harm by going to Tarsus, and Peter bringing Tabitha (Dorcas) back to life in Joppa.

Chapter 10 continues with Peter’s ministry and is primarily devoted to his teaching of Cornelius, who was a centurion in the Italian group or band of the Roman army. Cornelius was religious and practiced good works, praying and helping the needy. He taught his household to do likewise. One day in Caesarea, which had become a substantial city and capital of the province due to Herod the Great, in the middle of the afternoon, Cornelius had a vision in which he was instructed to send a few men to Joppa to bring Peter back to Caesarea, which was 30 miles north of Joppa.

The group neared Joppa around noon, which was when Peter was on the housetop praying. He was hungry but because the meal wasn’t ready, he fell asleep and had a strange vision that kept repeating. In the vision he saw a great sheet be let down from the sky. There were several kinds of tame and wild animals on the sheet. As the sheet lowered, a voice from heaven said, “Get up, Peter, kill and eat!” Jews could only eat certain kinds of meat; forbidden meat was called common and unclean. When Peter saw the animals he said to the Lord that he couldn’t eat anything unclean, but God said, “What God has made clean do not call common.” After this scene played out three times, Peter awoke, wondering what it meant, but as he did this Cornelius’ group arrived. Peter met them, identified himself, and asked what their purpose was. Told they were to bring him back to Caesarea, he agreed but told them to stay overnight; Peter showed great hospitality and offered the group lodging. The next day, the three men of Cornelius and Peter with six “believing Jews” left for Caesarea; when they arrived, Cornelius had arranged for his relatives and friends to be part of the welcoming party for Peter. This was the first time Peter had been at the home of a Gentile, and the experience suddenly helped him understand what his vision meant, that he should not call any man common or unclean. Peter doesn’t hesitate to enter the home.



After Peter’s arrival, Cornelius is so overwhelmed that he actually falls at Peter’s feet and worships him. Peter proclaims he is only a man, like Cornelius, and in the presence of

the entire contingent, says what his vision meant and why God had wanted Peter to come visit. In essence Peter was saying, “I see that God accepts any people who fear him and do what is right and good, whatever their nation. This is why I didn’t argue about coming here.” This concept is another key element of the growth of the church.

Cornelius explains what his vision had been that brought Peter there. Then at Verse 34, Peter makes a speech that was a beautiful commentary on the advancement of the church to that point. He says, “I really understand now that to God every person is the same. God accepts anyone who worships him and does what is right. It is not important what country a person comes from.” He calls that message the Good News; peace has come through Jesus Christ. His comments continue with a review of Christ’s life and ministry and conclude, “Everyone who believes in Jesus will be forgiven. God will forgive his sins through Jesus. All the prophets say this is true.”

Chapter 10 concludes with a description of the Holy Spirit “coming down” on all the people present. That amazed the Jewish believers who had come with Peter; they were amazed that the gift of the Spirit had been given to even the non-Jewish. There was great praising of God, upon which Peter said those present needed to be baptized. After the festive day, Peter stayed with them for a few days.

In Chapter 11, the glorious expansion of the church continues with Peter in Jerusalem.

Sources: Harper Study Bible; The Everyday Bible: New Testament; Egermeier’s Bible Story Book; The Acts of the Apostles, Neal M. Flanagan.

Next month: Acts, Chapter 11.

---CLIFF SCHROCK

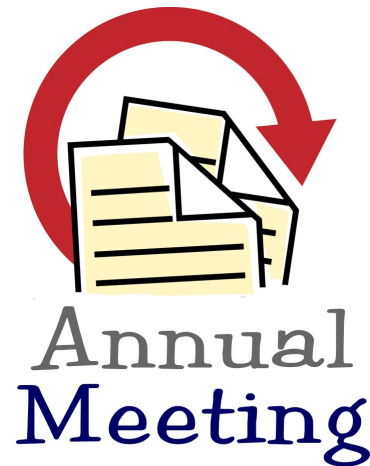
2022 ANNUAL MEETING REVIEW

With a new pastor at the helm, Holy Cross members convene on its affairs, including officers, finances

The annual meeting of Holy Cross Lutheran Church was already scheduled for a virtual meeting at 12:30 p.m., Sunday, January 30, due to Covid-related, social-distancing guidelines when a Friday-into-Saturday, 10-plus-inch snow-fall made sure that a virtual hearing would be the smart choice. For Holy Cross history buffs this was the second year in a row the church did its business in virtual fashion.

Outgoing President Sherry Duff called the meeting to order at 12:33 p.m. in Zoom online style, with attendees present on screen, which sadly prevented them from feasting on carb-heavy brunch food normally put out in the Froehlich Fellowship Hall by the Board of Directors but at least masks weren't an issue! The agenda was a "normal" one since the pastoral-call process agenda item of last January was concluded in 2021. If there were areas of concern it was the lack of four officer candidates for election along with the New Business of a Music Director vacancy.

The President said she wanted to keep the meeting to 90 minutes in order to allow anyone going to NED President Yeadon's funeral to arrive on time. She also announced Kerry Geffert as Parliamentarian and that Greg Dowling would be "driving" the agenda slides; both, she said, would monitor the "chat" input. Following an opening prayer by the President, she thanked the Board and all who have done work for the church, and said the attendees (and the membership, in general) would see during the officer elections that Holy Cross has many opportunities to serve and our members need to step up. A quorum was present with roughly 53 people present but this is not the official number.



The agenda continued with the unanimous approval of two sets of meeting minutes, the 2021 Annual Meeting and the May 2021 Special Congregational Voters' meeting. That was followed by reports from the individual commission directors, who spoke about what their commissions had done during 2021. In order they were: Worship/Lydia Struzik; Shepherds/Pat Deloge; Social Ministry/Kendra Norman; Discipleship/Adela Buck (Kathy Boivie was absent); Education/Kristen Messerschmitt; Evangelism/Cliff Schrock; Property/Dan Senft, and Technology/Gary Messerschmitt. In Mr. Senft's comments, in particular, he thanked our custodian Roger, Office Administrator Mary Schrock, and our "handy" Pastor Erb.

Next up was the election of seven officer positions: President, Kerry Geffert; Vice President, Sherry Duff; Shepherds, Cindy Ciccio and Karen Geffert; and open positions for Financial Secretary, Worship, Education and Discipleship. Donna Bogen nominated outgoing Worship Director Lydia Struzik for the same position; technically that made Ms. Struzik the only returning officer to her position, although Mr. Geffert returns after previously serving two terms as President. Ms. Duff moving to VP gives us two officers in the top two spots for the first time in a few years. Departing from the Board were Ms. Deloge (Shepherds), Ms. Buck and Ms. Boivie (Discipleship), and Ms. Messerschmitt (Education). Chad Helminger's Financial Secretary term also expired. After the nomination from the floor of Ms. Struzik, Mr. Geffert moved (Ms. Struzik seconded) that the slate of officers be approved as presented; the motion carried.

Financial matters were the next business. Mr. Helminger presented income numbers for 2021. The total member giving, of all form types, was \$348,175 (\$294,264 in 2020); that included \$66,000 in Share the Hope funds. He said online giving continued to be popular; there were 74 different givers (66 in 2020); counting teams were re-established in 2021. He thanked Ms. Schrock and the counting teams. Treasurer Greg Dowling then reviewed the income and expense comparison, terming it a "flat" year. The church had a deficit of \$4,353.39. The major hurt was 35 percent over budget in property/parsonage; otherwise the church managed expenses well. The year ended with \$292,154 in cash and investments, down from a starting balance of \$302,963. Preschool actual income was \$297,947.72 versus actual expenses of \$262,153.84 for a surplus of \$35,793.88, a great improvement from a deficit in 2020 of \$22,482.32, the first year since 2017 the preschool had not had a surplus. Mr. Dowling then fully reviewed the 2022 budgets for church and preschool. Proposed church income and expenses were both \$366,322.79 for a balanced budget projection. For the preschool, proposed income was \$292,152.00 versus expenses of \$240,719.13 for a surplus of \$51,432.87. The budget proposals called for a 6 percent increase in salaries. Mr. Messerschmitt moved (Ms. Norman seconded) that the budgets be approved as presented; motion carried. President Duff said the church was blessed to be in stable financial health and thanked Mr. Dowling for his treasurer work.

Annual Meeting review continues on Page 7

Annual Meeting review continues from Page 6

There was nothing discussed under Old Business. Under New Business, President Duff explained that our Music Director position is open after Sally Finck's resignation; her last day in service was January 30. During a candidate search, Mary Ann Schiller, Elijah Morris and Elisabeth Erb will be substitutes. Also under New Business, the President briefly discussed that HC will be considering a new and updated approach to governance since we are having a hard time engaging people to serve under the long-standing constitutional structure. Another announcement was that Mr. Geffert and Pastor Erb will be attending the June NED convention in Springfield, Mass. Lastly, also in NED affairs, Mr. Geffert moved (Ms. Struzik seconded) to nominate Pastor Beinke for both the NED President and regional vice president positions; the motion carried. There were no nominations for positions of district treasurer and secretary.

Pastor Erb was moved up in the agenda to provide his comments, herewith summarized: He and his family feel blessed to be at Holy Cross and for the welcome they received. His thoughts on moving forward to grow will have to be worked through the coming Board changeover as well as the effects of Covid restrictions. We can start the conversations together and work on ideas and plan for the future. He paused to thank President Duff's efforts, along with praising God for Pastors Meyer and Flammann and all the guest pastors who served Holy Cross during vacancy. God is faithful and will bring us through.

In an entertaining analogy of a restaurant he compared Holy Cross to one, specifically the Holy Cross café, run by a family. There is a power to a family-run restaurant, with "close-knitness" and built-in trust, which is good, to love and care for each other but we're not in the church to only love and care for each other. The church is called to expand the family of God. A family-run restaurant can be good but like our church we have the same people doing the same job, for years, and eventually that can take a toll. It doesn't mean anyone's doing a bad job but after being run by the same people there are opportunities for new vigor, strategies, dreams and new ways of running things. And with new thinking comes a new menu to fulfill our mission. Us Lutherans know about food, and as Christians we have the best "dish" and that's the bread of life that Jesus brings. Covid has squashed many of the things we've done but we have the opportunity to clean up the menu and hone in on the strengths we have and make them stronger and more appealing.

He mentioned making recent inroads with preschool families, and he would like to find ways to utilize the preschool as a strength in our community and highlight it as a mission of our church to bring more families in. This would ensure anyone who comes here will get a well-balanced meal with opportunities for themselves and their families, to grow, to give, to serve and to be served. The caveat is that we have to be focused and intentional. Not everything can make the menu. We have to decide what kind of food we're going to serve. He loves a potluck where everyone brings their own dish; it works while you're eating, but for our intention and our focus, we have to look closely at our vision and revisit it and be selective about what stays and goes and focus our intentions on what we do best. For instance, we need to assess what we need to do to make our "campus" inviting and friendly to those who walk in, that it is welcoming and inviting, looking at our space with visitor's eyes to make it a place where they can fit in. It is important to not be afraid of the Gospel and sharing the hope that we have. We want people who come through our doors to stay and feel connected. It would be great to preach the Gospel and that makes everyone want to come. But he said sometimes the Gospel's not enough for people; it is for him but sometimes you have to look closely at your focus and your mission and see what stays and what goes so we can focus our efforts on what we do best. We want people to get the bread of life, the main thing, with their church experience. "We want to ensure that all who come here know they have a place to be and know who we are and what we have to offer." He plans to prioritize a mission vision for Holy Cross, reorganize the leadership, a clear strategy for communication, use the power of social media to reach a broad audience, and building friendships among the youth and children so our young people can be connected. He said he is confident that God will lead us forward to accomplish His will in Trumbull.

There were no remarks in an open discussion, after which President Duff thanked Pastor Erb, Holy Cross is blessed to have him and she is excited about the future. Pastor Erb closed the meeting with a prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 2:11 p.m.

---CLIFF SCHROCK

Holy Cross Word Managing Editor

