

# Holy Cross Lutheran Church

School and Early Learning Center

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December 10, 2023

*"Prepare the Way of the Lord"*

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## WELCOME TO HOLY CROSS!

**OUR SAVIOR WELCOMES YOU AND SO DO WE!** Whether you are a first time visitor or returning guest, we are delighted to share our worship with you! Please come back and worship with us again!

**PARENTS OF LITTLE ONES** We love to have children in worship! However, parents who find a need to take their children out of the service are welcome to use the narthex/lobby area while you quiet your little one. The infant care room is also available for nursing mothers. You'll be able to hear the service from the speaker system in the narthex and in the infant care room. A changing table is in the men's and women's bathrooms. If needed, please ask an usher for assistance.

**REGISTRATION CARDS** are in the hymnal racks. Guests may use the registration cards to let us know how we may further assist you. We encourage all members and guests to fill out a registration card and place it in the offering plate. Thank you!

**A HEARING LOOP** is installed in our sanctuary for your convenience. If your hearing aid has a t-switch, you'll need to activate it when you're in the sanctuary, in order to benefit from the hearing loop.

**CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES** Holy Cross offers a full Christian elementary school (grades PreK3 – 8), Kids Crossing Early Learning Center (6 weeks – 5 years), Sunday School and children's youth activities.

**PRAYER CONCERNS?** Contact Sherri Bartels, [sbbartels.sb@gmail.com](mailto:sbbartels.sb@gmail.com). Our prayer chain is a large group of Holy Cross members who join you in calling upon God with your prayer concerns. Galatians 6:2 says "Carry each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

**USHERS** are on duty during church services. Please speak with them if you need assistance.

**LIVE STREAM WORSHIP** If you or a loved one are unable to attend worship, our 8:30 am service is live streamed on the church website.

**PHONE-IN WORSHIP** Sundays at 8:30 a.m. (Call any time after 8:20 a.m.; dial 1 (978) 990-5164 followed by access code 6279900#)

**ON DEMAND WORSHIP** View or listen to any of our past worship services by visiting our website and click the tab labeled Live Stream/Sermons and click sermons.

**WORSHIP SCHEDULE** Sunday, 8:30 am 10:30am and Monday, 6:30 pm.

**TRANSPORTATION FUND** If you have no other way to church, taxi rides to and from church are available. Please speak with the Pastor or call the church office at 249-3101.

**THE LORD'S SUPPER** is offered on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of each month and the following Mondays. We believe the Lord's Supper is an expression of our unity of faith in our Savior as well as our unity in all scriptural teachings. Since the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod profess full unity in biblical teaching, members of these church bodies are welcome to commune with us. If you are a member of a different Christian church, we ask that you wait to commune until you have closely examined what we teach and are convinced that we are a church that preaches the true Word of God, and that you are in agreement with our teachings. Please speak with a pastor if you are a guest and would like to commune.

**MISSION STATEMENT** The mission of Holy Cross Lutheran Church and School is to bring the Gospel of Christ to our community through the Means of Grace, reaching out to the lost, and nurturing our fellow believers. This we do through worship, education, service and fellowship that God's kingdom may grow.

# ***"Prepare the Way of the Lord"***

***December 10, 2023***

***Second Sunday in Advent***

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*Service of the Word – Page 38*

**Senior Choir**....."Prepare the Way"

## **Invocation**

Minister: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

Congregation: **And also with you.**

## **Confession of Sins**

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: **Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: **Amen.**

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

## Taste and See

C: Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Bless - ed are they who take ref - uge in him. Your Word, O Lord, is eter - nal; it stands firm in the heav - ens. Your faith - ful - ness con - tin - ues for - ev - er. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Bless - ed are they who take ref - uge in him.

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. It consists of six staves of music. The lyrics are placed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

## Prayer of the Day

M: Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the way for your only Son. By his coming give us strength in our conflicts and shed light on our path through the darkness of this world; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: A - men.

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It consists of a single staff of music. The lyrics 'A - men.' are placed below the notes, with a hyphen indicating the syllable 'men' spans across two notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

**The First Lesson**.....Isaiah 40:1-11

*Isaiah prophesies a voice in the wilderness will call out, "Prepare the way for the Lord."*

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

2Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call out to her.

Her warfare really is over.

Her guilt is fully paid for.

Yes, she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

3A voice is calling out:

In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord.

In the wasteland make a level highway for our God.

4Every valley will be raised up,  
and every mountain and hill will be made low.

The rugged ground will become level,  
and the rough places will become a plain.

5Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed,  
and all flesh together will see it.

Yes, the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

6A voice was saying, "Cry out!"

And I said, "What shall I cry out?"

All flesh is grass,  
and all its beauty is like a wildflower in the countryside.

7Grass withers, flowers fade,  
when the breath of the Lord blows on them.

Yes, the people are grass.

8Grass withers, flowers fade,  
but the Word of our God endures forever.

9Get up on a high mountain,  
O Zion, you herald of good news.

Lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, you herald of good news.

Lift it up! Do not be afraid!

Say to the cities of Judah,

"Here is your God!"

10Look, God the Lord will come with strength,  
and his arm is ruling for him.

Look, his reward is with him.

The result of his work is in front of him.

11Like a shepherd he will care for his flock.

With his arm he will gather the lambs.

He will lift them up on his lap.

He will gently lead the nursing mothers.

**Psalm of the Day**.....Psalm 85 (selected verses)

M: You showed favor to your land, O Lord. You restored Jacob.

**C: You removed the guilt of your people. You covered all their sin.**

M: Show us your mercy, O Lord, and give us your salvation.

**C: I will hear what the true God, the Lord, will say. He indeed speaks peace to his people, to his favored ones.**

M: Surely his salvation is near for those who fear him, so that glory may dwell in our land.

**C: Mercy and truth meet together. Righteousness and peace kiss each other.**

**Second Lesson**.....2 Peter 3:8-14  
*The Day of the Lord will come.*

8But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: For the Lord, one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. 9The Lord is not slow to do what he promised, as some consider slowness. Instead, he is patient for your sakes, not wanting anyone to perish, but all to come to repentance.

10But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that day the heavens will pass away with a roar, the elements will be dissolved as they burn with great heat, and the earth and what was done on it will be burned up. 11Therefore, since all these things will be destroyed, what kind of people ought you to be, living in holiness and godliness, 12as you look forward to and hasten the coming of the day of God? That day will cause the heavens to be set on fire and destroyed, and the elements to melt as they burn with great heat. 13But according to his promise we look forward to new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

14Therefore, dear friends, as you look forward to these things, make every effort to be found in peace, spotless and blameless in his sight.

**Verse of the Day**



C: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!



These words are writ - ten that we may be - lieve that



Je - sus is the Christ, the Son of God.



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

**Lighting of the Second Advent Candle: The Bethlehem Candle**

**Hymn #16**....."On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry"

1 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry  
Announces that the Lord is nigh;  
Come, then, and listen, for he brings  
Good news about the King of kings.

2 Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin  
And furnished for a guest within,  
And let us all our hearts prepare  
For Christ to come and enter there.

3 We hail you as our Savior, Lord,  
Our refuge and our great reward.  
Without your grace we waste away  
Like flow'rs that wither and decay.

4 Stretch forth your hand, our health restore,  
And lift us up to fall no more.  
Oh, make your face on us to shine,  
And fill the world with love divine.

5 All praise to you, eternal Son,  
Whose advent has our freedom won,  
Whom with the Father we adore  
And Holy Spirit evermore.

**Sermon**.....Pastor Mark Bartels.....“Prepare the Way of the Lord”

*Mark 1:1-8*

1The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2This is how it is written in the prophet Isaiah:  
Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare the way for you.

3A voice of one calling out in the wilderness,  
“Prepare the way of the Lord.  
Make his paths straight.”

4John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

5The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him. They were baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. 6John was clothed in camel’s hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. 7He preached, “One more powerful than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals! 8I baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

### **Apostles’ Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### **Offering**

**Offertory Music** Adult Handbells.....“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

### **Prayer of the Church During Advent**

M: Eternal Father, throughout the centuries you repeated and affirmed your promise to send the offspring of the woman to crush the serpent’s head. Through your prophets of old, you continually directed the eyes of your people to the advent of their Savior.

**C: We Praise you, O Lord, for keeping your promise and sending your Son to destroy the works of the devil.**

M: As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our King, use your mighty Word to shatter our pride and to rouse us from the spiritual slumber and apathy.

**C: Move us to take to heart the words of John: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."**

M: You sent your Son to redeem us from sin. Let this good news be our joy and strength. Use it to cheer the lonely, encourage the fearful, and give hope to the despairing. In these days before Christmas, spare us from the stress of deadlines and the frenzy of commercialism.

**C: Fill our lives with the message of your peace and the music of your grace.**

M: Direct our eyes not only to the manger but also to the skies, where we will see your Son coming again, not as a lowly child but as the Lord of lords.

**C: Lift up our hearts in joyful anticipation of that day.**

*Special prayers and intercessions may follow.*

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

*Silent prayer.*

M: Come quickly, Lord Jesus, in your grace, in your power, in your glory.

**C: Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Closing Hymn** #11....."Comfort, Comfort All My People"

1 "Comfort, comfort all my people;  
Speak of peace," so says our God.  
"Comfort those who sit in darkness,  
Groaning from their sorrows' load.  
Speak to all Jerusalem  
Of the peace that waits for them;  
Tell them that their sins I cover,  
That their warfare now is over."



2 All their sins our God will pardon,  
Blotting out each dark misdeed;  
All that well deserve his anger  
He no more will see or heed.  
They have suffered many a day;  
Now their griefs have passed away.  
God will change their aching sadness  
Into ever-springing gladness.

3 John the Baptist's voice is crying  
In the desert far and near,  
Calling people to repentance  
For the kingdom now is here.  
Oh, that warning cry obey!  
Now prepare for God a way;  
Let the valleys rise to meet him  
And the hills bow down to greet him.

4 Straighten out the crooked highway;  
Make the rougher places plain.  
Let your hearts be true and humble,  
Ready for his holy reign.  
For the glory of the Lord  
Now o'er earth is spread abroad,  
And all flesh shall see the token  
That his word is never broken.

### Closing Prayer

M: O Lord God, our heavenly Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep us strong in your grace and truth, protect and comfort us in all temptation, and bestow on us your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



### Benediction

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another.  
Serve the Lord with gladness.  
The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.



## **Announcements**

If you attended online services at Holy Cross, please send an email to [frontoffice@holycrossmadison.org](mailto:frontoffice@holycrossmadison.org), and in the subject line write "Attended" and after that the number of people who watched from your home. So if three of you watch the service on Sunday, your subject line would say, "Attended 3". Thanks.

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## **Holy Cross News & Notes**

December 10, 2023

### **Calendar for the Week - December 11th – December 17th**

#### **Monday**

- Worship - 6:30 pm
- Bible Information Class- 7:30 pm

#### **Tuesday**

- Senior Ministry Coffee at Elie's - 9:00 am

#### **Wednesday**

- Wednesday Bible Study - 10:00 am
- Adult Handbell Choir - 6:00 pm
- Senior Choir - 7:00 pm

#### **Thursday**

- Membership Committee - 9:15 am
- Ladies Aid - 12:30 pm
- All Boards - 6:00 pm
- Church Council - 7:30 pm

#### **Saturday**

- Jesus Cares - 10:00 am

#### **Sunday**

- Worship - 8:30 & 10:30 am
- Sunday School - 9:45 am
- Adult Bible Study - 9:45 am

**HOSPITALIZED THIS WEEK** Heather Schoenfeld gave birth to a new baby boy!  
Please pray for them and our homebound and for those in nursing homes.

#### **FOR ONLINE GIVERS: ONLINE GIVING PAGE UPDATE**

Holy Cross is pleased to announce our new and improved online giving page! Vanco, our electronic giving provider, has updated their online giving platform to make it easier to make one-time gifts or set up recurring donations to our church. The new page is now live on our website. Nothing about our online giving has changed except for the visual look of the page. You can adjust existing donations, set up new gifts and update personal information much as you have before. How to sign up? It's easy! If you're a new online giver to Holy Cross, simply visit our website at <https://www.holycrossway.org/holy-cross-lutheran-church/donate>, and then click the "Donate Now" button. From there you can sign up to create a Vanco Online account and give to our various ministries. If you already have a Vanco account (if you have already set up a user-name and password on our online donation page), you can log in to the new page using the same username and password as before. Simply tap or click the "Log In" button at the top right of your screen. From there you can update scheduled donations or set up new recurring gifts by clicking "Profile" and then "View Scheduled Donations." You can also check out this Vanco Online How-To Guide for step by step instructions: [https://www.vancopayments.com/hubfs/Updated\\_Downloadable\\_Assets/Faith/Vanco\\_Online\\_How\\_to\\_Guide\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.vancopayments.com/hubfs/Updated_Downloadable_Assets/Faith/Vanco_Online_How_to_Guide_FINAL.pdf). Please stop by the church office or call/email us if you have questions or need assistance.

#### **SUNDAY SCHOOL NOTES FOR PARENTS**

The Sunday School Christmas Service will take place Sunday, December 17, at 10:30 a.m. We are already beginning to learn our parts. December 3 and 10 we will be practicing our service in the sanctuary between services in place of regular Sunday School class. There will be Sunday School on the 17th to give us one last opportunity to prepare. Please make sure your student(s) is (are) in attendance for those three Sundays (12/3, 12/10 and 12/17). It is important to have as many students there as possible as we prepare for and celebrate the birth of our Savior. Thank you!  
The Sunday School Christmas Service will be livestreamed for friends and relatives who cannot attend in person.

## SERMON VIDEO LINKS

Holy Cross will begin sharing videos of our most recent sermons with you. Our hope in doing this is twofold. First of all, we hope that, as you watch these videos yourself as a part of your own regular devotional life, the Holy Spirit would strengthen your faith during the week. Secondly, we ask that you share these videos with your friends, relatives, and neighbors as you see fit. You could forward this email on to those you think would be interested, or simply copy and paste the links to your social media feed for all your online friends. For example, if there's a sermon that addresses a particular topic, such as grief, you can pass it on to someone you know is grieving. Our Savior told His disciples to "preach the gospel to all creation" (Mk 16:15), and this is just one more we can fulfill His great commission. And we have the promise from God that, as the apostle Paul says, "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ" (Ro 10:17). The Holy Spirit will work on human hearts wherever His Word is proclaimed.

12/3/23 - Keep Watch for Christ's Advent

<https://vimeo.com/890808370?share=copy>

12/10/23 - Prepare the Way of the Lord

## ELS YOUTH "UGLY CHRISTMAS PARTY"

7th-12th graders are invited to join other area ELS youth for an evening of bowling, pizza and soda at the annual Ugly Christmas Party. This year's party is set for Sunday, December 10, 5:30-7:30 p.m., at Spartan Bowl in McFarland. The cost will be \$10 per person and includes bowling, shoe-rental, pizza and soda. Prize awarded for the ugliest dressed!

## SPECIAL HOLIDAY WORSHIP SERVICES SCHEDULE

- Sunday School Christmas Program: Sunday, Dec. 17 @ 10:30 am
- Holy Cross School Christmas Program: Wednesday, Dec. 20 @ 4 pm
- Sunday, Dec. 24
  - 9 am Advent 4 worship service
  - Christmas Eve Worship at 2:30 pm & 4:30 pm
- Christmas Day Monday, Dec. 25 @ 9 am
- New Year's Eve Sunday, Dec. 31 @ 9 am (with individual absolution)
- New Year's Day, Monday, Jan 1 : No worship service

## HOLY CROSS YOUTH PACKER PARTY

Attention 7th-12th graders! The Holy Cross Youth Group December event will be a Packers Party!

When: Sunday, December 17th, after the 10:30AM Sunday School Christmas Program.

Where: Holy Cross, Fireside Room.

Time: 12:00PM - 3:30PM.

We will be streaming the Packers vs Buccaneers game in the Fireside room. There will also be food, games, and card-making for our homebound members and for those in local assisted living and nursing homes. Please use this link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050B49AEAD2CA1F85-46448963-december> to RSVP. We would love to see you there - wear your favorite Packers attire! Questions? Please speak with Pastor Van Kampen or Sophie Griffin. Thank you!

## 24-25 KINDERGARTEN INFORMATION MEETING

Mark your calendar for January 10, 2024 for a presentation on Kindergarten for the 24-25 school year. It will be held in the Fireside room from 4:30-5:30 PM. This event is for parents to hear about our program and meet the teacher and principal. Please use this link to sign up. Spread the word about our great school!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30EoD4EAFAB2CAFA7-46493473-kindergarten>

### **HOLIDAY GREETINGS FROM OUR EARLY LEARNING TEAM!**

Love spreading holiday cheer? This season, consider spreading some holiday cheer to our Early Learning Center classrooms!

We have ideas both big and small to help our children learn and grow.

Click the link below, or scan the code with your camera, to check out our Amazon wishlist. In the comment section, you will see which classroom the item is for. Dreamers: infant room, Explorers: one-year-old room, Growers: two-year-old room, Movers: 3K, Thinkers: 4K

Thank you very much for your love, generosity, and support!



### **ENDOWMENT FUND MATCHING OPPORTUNITY**

A gracious donor has offered to match dollar for dollar any donations given to the Endowment Fund up to \$10,000. A gift to the Holy Cross Endowment Fund is a gift which 'keeps on giving.' Once a gift is given to the fund, it builds interest or income. Only the interest is spent annually. The larger the fund grows, the greater the amount of interest that's available for the congregation to use for key non-budgeted items. This is an important fund for Holy Cross. For example, this year the Fund was used for the purchase and installation of 12 outdoor security cameras. Currently the Endowment Fund balance is approximately \$385,000. Praise God for this wonderful opportunity!