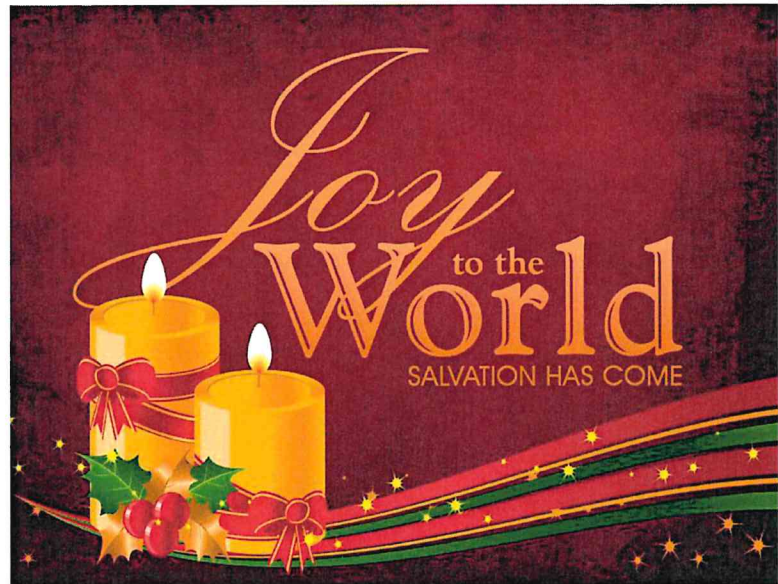


WORSHIP AT HOLY CROSS IN CHRISTMAS WEEK –

“Lights, Carol Music and Jingle Bells” at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, at **3 pm on Thursday, December 24th**

This is a ‘come and go’ event from 3 pm to 4 pm at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1998 Lansing Ave Ne, Salem, OR 97301. We will invite you to:

- Enter through the handicapped access (our usual door), then take a devotional, and enter the sanctuary.
- Sit apart from others, in prayer, enjoying the Carols played on the organ by Tim Bibelheimer (we will not be singing during these Covid 19 times)
- Light a candle, if you choose, at the Chancel, in memory, or in solidarity with those who have died during the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- Leave a post it note at your seat, in order that that others who enjoy the sanctuary will not sit in the same place.
- Then, stop in the atrium (where the glass ceiling looks out on the cherry tree), and enjoy recordings of our Holy Cross Bell Choir playing for your enjoyment.
- Finally, receive a jingle bell as you leave the sanctuary through the large doors in the atrium. Many people around the world are planning to ring bells for Christmas Eve at 4 pm PST. Won't you join them?
- Pastor Patricia will be praying in the sanctuary, but available for private prayer in the narthex, beginning at 4:05 pm.
- Details (and a foot traffic map) of this worship plan will be available at the church on Christmas Eve.



Sunday, December 27th at 12 noon – Drive Up Communion UGLY CHRISTMAS SWEATER EVENT! Bring your bread and wine or grape juice, wear a fun Christmas item and expect to take a selfie with the pastor!

Love Has Come - A time when the impossible is possible, and vice versa. I love Christmas time and I even love all the hoky Christmas movies. One of my favorites is "It's a Wonderful Life" – I won't recap the whole movie for you, but a major theme in this movie is that we are Loved – that we are important in the fabric of our lives, and all the lives around us. I've brought my Navajo Tree of Life rug with me today – I bought this on the reservation from an artists cooperative about 18 years ago. Weaving impresses me, because there are so many strands so many colors, and yet if I clip and pull one of these threads out, most of the design will be destroyed. We are each important in this life, we are all connected. Mary, the mother of God, is the main character in the reading this morning from Luke. She is just a young girl, but she receives God's favor, and is chosen to be the mother of the son of God through the gifting of the Holy Spirit. There are lots of call stories in the bible – Samuel is called as a young boy in the temple to serve the lord in that temple. Abraham is called to follow God's voice to a far off land, where he will be the father of a great nation. Moses is called by a burning bush to cause Pharaoh to let his people free from slavery. Mary's story, though, is not of great deeds or great journeys but rather great love. Mary is called to love the world through the child of her own body, given to her from God. Mary struggles to understand God's gift of love to her, quite practically, since she is unmarried, how does this work? Another way Mary is part of this saga of great love is her connection with her cousin Elizabeth, a woman of great age, who is also to bear a son, John the Baptist. God has already worked his miracle with Elizabeth when this story in Luke 1 takes place – that woman and her husband who are long past childbearing years is definitely pregnant. The impossible is possible, in other words.

Love has come. This is the story we have been journeying towards in advent, This is the story of Christmas. Mary is not a pawn in the larger story of God's love, you see. Yes, Micah had foretold the birth in Bethlehem all those hundreds of years ago. Yes, Zephaniah told of God's forgiveness of all our screw ups. But Mary says yes. After only one question. She says yes to the gift of Love to the world coming through her. This one answer will change her life forever. You and I are very familiar with another time we see Mary, in John's gospel at the foot of the cross. She will feel all the love, and then all the pain of this gift to humanity of God's Son. She does it willingly, quickly, humbly. Mary is greatly favored – that doesn't mean she's any more special than you are – but that God's favor fell on her for this task. And then, that's when she shows her superpower, which is love indeed.

We live in times when humanity has taken a gut punch from a global pandemic. It's hard sometimes to feel the love of God. But that's simply because we don't trust enough, or we don't let go of our fears enough. Mary shows us in Luke 1 how to be the Love that the world needs- just a vehicle. So can you be a vehicle for God's love? We're not God, we don't have power like that. But we can notice the hurting, the hungry, the lonely, and reach out, each of us, individually, to remind each soul that their strand is important in the design of this world. Say Yes, let it be so. Be love to the world. Amen. – Pastor Patricia+

WORSHIPPING AT HOME WITH HOLY CROSS
First Sunday of Christmas
December 27, 2020

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
whose forgiveness is sure
and whose steadfast love endures forever. Amen.
Together let us honestly and humbly confess
that we have not lived as God desires.

Loving and forgiving God, **we confess that we are held captive by sin.**
In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray.
We have not welcomed the stranger;
we have not loved our neighbor;
we have not been Christ to one another.
Restore us, O God.
Wake us up and turn us from our sin.
Remind us that you are Waiting for each of us,
To renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.

People of God, hear this glad news:
by God's endless grace
your sins are forgiven, and you are free—
free from all that holds you back
and free to live ever in the presence of God's love
through times of waiting, and times of fear.
May you be strengthened in God's love,
† comforted by Christ's peace,
and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Gathering Hymn – ELW 290 “Go Tell It on the Mountain”

Refrain

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!

1 While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,

behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. *Refrain*

2 The shepherds feared and trembled
when, lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain*

3 Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*

Prayer of the Day: Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Readings and Psalm

Isaiah 61:10--62:3

Clothed in garments of salvation

Psalm 148

The splendor of the LORD is over earth and heaven. *(Ps. 148:13)*

Galatians 4:4-7

Children and heirs of God

Luke 2:22-40

The presentation of the child

Apostles' Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. **Amen**

The Prayers of Intercession (see attached prayers)

Offering Prayer

Generous God,
you have created all that is,
and you provide for us in every season.
Bless all that we offer,
that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing.
In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

When our congregation gathered for the celebration of Holy Communion, we heard again the story of God's mighty acts and of the love shown us in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With thanksgiving we remembered that "in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

The people of our congregation were given assurance of our Lord's presence through the gift of his Holy Spirit. Now we bring to you this same bread of life and this same cup of blessing, that you may be strengthened through your participation in the body of Christ.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall never hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

At this time, you may remember the gift of holy communion with your own bread and cup.

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace. **Amen**

Communion Blessing

Gracious and abundant God,
you have done great things for us, and we rejoice.
In this bread and cup you give us life forever.
In your boundless mercy, strengthen us
and open our hearts to the world's needs,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Blessing

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting,
the long-expected Savior fill you with love,
the unexpected Spirit guide your journey,
✠ now and forever.

Praying together at Holy Cross –

December 24/25, 2020



God of power and might, during this holy time, our thoughts turn to Christmas Eves from our past, family that we miss, and church encounters that we yearn for. In the midst of our own grief and loss, we wrestle with the unrelenting sadness over the nearly 300,000 deaths from Covid 19 in our country. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Creator God, we thank you for this world, this beautiful place in which we live. Help us to take care of your gift to us. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Righteous God, in this time of gifts and giving, show us who needs our help, and our caring right now. Take away whatever prevents us today from giving to those in need. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Compassionate God, help us to reach out to all who struggle with the loneliness of this particular Christmas. Help us to find ways to connect safely, always putting the health of others first. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Healing God, as a vaccine for the Covid19 pandemic is being administered in this week, may you give us patience and the willingness to wait for our turn. Lord, let the vaccine reach people, and curtail the numbers who succumb to this disease, today. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Eternal God, in the midst of this season of joy, we experience the death of people whose lives have touched ours. Give us good memories of our dead, and inspire us with their steadfast witness. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

In this day of Incarnation, draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Praying together at Holy Cross –

December 27, 2020 – 1st Sunday of Christmas

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need. Night and day, all creation praises you, O God. Strengthen your church across nations, denominations, and traditions. Fill us with wisdom and unify our proclamation of your forgiveness and mercy. God of abundant grace,



Open your healing hands.

All creation is holy to you, O God. You cause the earth to bring forth its shoots and gardens to spring up. Protect hibernating animals and frozen lands that wait earnestly for longer days of awakening and growth. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

The nations are upheld by your hand, O God. Cause righteousness and praise to spring forth, inspiring leaders to serve with compassion and integrity. Send your spirit of discernment upon legislators grappling with complex decisions for the sake of the common good. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Send the spirit of your Son into our hearts, O God. Come quickly to hearts that race with fear, hearts that break with grief, and hearts that long for wholeness. In these days of global Pandemic, be with the sick, the dying and those grieving. Reveal your power to heal and to save. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Adopt us into your family, O God. Bless our elders with the peace and joy of Simeon and Anna. Strengthen those who have retired, those who work in older age, and those in need of income, food, company, or health care. Connect young and old across generations. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Let us depart in peace, O God, according to your word. For all your saints, we give you thanks. Prepare our salvation in the sight of all your witnesses of every time and place. God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.