

December 8, 2020

We are intentional people of God who seek to be used by God for God's purposes – to build up individuals, and communities, to praise God together, to foster goodwill and care for those who may be in need or want at this time. To be God's disciples – following Christ's example. Bless you – Pastor P+

We are so happy to announce that the names for the children we were hoping to sponsor have all been chosen – Thank you. If you chose a name please note – your gift must be brought to HOLY CROSS no later than December 16th. We will Wrap on the 17th, and arrange for pickup on the 18th. God bless you.

Did you watch the video from the Stronger Together churches? I am excited for these 4 videos we are crafting for the 10 churches for the 4 weeks of Advent. You can find them on our YouTube channel – Pastor Patricia Hughes, or Facebook – Holy Cross Lutheran –Salem or our website www.holycrosslutheran-salem.org

The Worship Arts team has created a beautiful space in the sanctuary and the gym for Advent, which we will use in videos when we can. If you are at the church, be sure to see it. We recorded Sunday's worship in the gym and it looks great!

Did you Know? Our friends at **Enchanted Forest** have announced they will be able to stay open thanks to fundraising. (Bless you if you were able to help). They also have an opportunity to buy a brick for \$250 if you want to support them a bit more. <https://www.bricksrus.com/donorsite/enchantedforest>

The Week ahead at Holy Cross - We're mailing out on Tuesday this week – Janet is recovering from her broken arm. Please pray for her continued healing. While the Governor has asked non essential workers to stay home as much as possible, several people may be handling the phones remotely but your calls and emails are important to us. We'll contact you, as soon as we can.

Cancelled until after the new year -Thursday –noon – in Person Bible Study – What is God Saying Today? -we will miss this group, but in the absence of better numbers, we will cancel this event right now. Consider attending the zoom group.

Thursday – December 10 on Zoom at 5 pm. We'll cover these bible passages Here's the link for zoom Bible Study <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/78252959541?pwd=NVps>

Zephaniah 3:14-20, Matthew 1:18-25

Tuesday, Dec 8 at 6:30 pm Finance on zoom, (email me if you need the link!)

Sunday, December 13th, noon – DRIVE UP COMMUNION! Bring your bread and wine or grape juice – line up in the parking lot – the Pastor and assisting Minister will offer prayers and Holy Communion. We will have the Advent Wreath up and lit! Rain or Shine – see you there!

Tuesday, December 15, 6:30 pm Council

You are a blessing to me, and I am thankful for you. God bless you all

Reverend Patricia Hughes+, Pastor



What's Happening at Family Promise

As our turn in the Interfaith Hospitality Network approaches (December 20th thru 26th), I wanted to let all of you know the changes happening at Family Promise as together we help families through a time of COVID-19, wildfires, and a housing shortage.

First, you should know **we rescued two newborn babes**, Kwan-Yin and Tyler from living in a car or the street earlier this fall. We are the first home these little ones have ever had. We are working with their parents to provide them with a better future. Thank you Holy Cross members for supporting the least in our community.

Our COVID response has suspended the practice of keeping families in churches. We don't expect that to change until late summer or early fall of 2021. No change will be made without active consent and participation of our church and other congregations in the network. So, **how do we shelter our families?**

When the pandemic hit, we housed our families in the Day Center. Then we rented Madison House so that our families could socially distance. Volunteer still provide meals delivered to the Day Center and to Madison House. This critical role not only provides home-cooked meals for our families, it reminds them that they are **connected to a larger community** that wishes them every success in achieving a home of their own. Thank you to all of you at Holy Cross who have helped change lives over the years.

In November, Family Promise was awarded a grant to provide support for families affected economically by COVID-19. The funds must be spent by December 30th. They have allowed us to help families in the following ways:

More families: We have temporarily expanded the number of families in the IHN program from 4 to 7. Currently, 5 families are staying in motels and 2 at Madison House. This allows **volunteers to continue our model of dropping off dinner at the Day Center and Madison House** four times a week. We will have our turn (with our partners Manantial and St. Timothy's) Christmas week.

Rental and Utility Assistance: Families may apply for help with past due rent or utility bills. This is aimed at keeping families stabilized in their existing housing as winter approaches.

Education: Family Promise is providing computers for students, who can schedule study time at the Day Center. That way families can have a quiet place for children to study, a hot spot to connect to school, and a place to recharge their electronics.

Family Promise continues to work with **wildfire evacuees**, and meets weekly with other agencies to find solutions for people made homeless by this disaster. Thank you to all who have contributed to helping our neighbors in the Canyon.

Through a partnership between *Saks Off Fifth* and National Family Promise, our local affiliate has received **hundreds of coats** to give to people in need. If you know someone who would benefit from a warm winter coat, please have them contact the Day Center at 503-370-9752.

In a year of adversity, Family Promise has adapted to the needs of the community. If you know of someone in need, or would like to help with our rotation week, please give me a call at 503-856-5151.

Doug Odell,
Holy Cross IHN coordinator

The Prophet Isaiah - In my early months serving as a hospital chaplain, I had a good supervisor. At the end of an awful day, where she had spent nearly the whole time with what was left of a family who had suffered a horrific accident and death, I brought her some tea, and said, “thought you’d need this at the end of one of the worst days ever”. She smiled a bit and said, “It was their worst day ever” nodding over her shoulder at the family she had cared for in their grief and anger at their terrible loss. “For me, just another day at the office.” Words I won’t ever forget. These words from Isaiah 40 have that same feel for me. The Prophet Isaiah who writes these words to the Jews in exile in Babylon has that same feel to me. Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins. A chaplain’s job in case I never bored you with the information, is not to convert anybody ever to any religion, but rather to uphold people in their own faith tradition when they find themselves torn apart by tragedy and loss. Isaiah is preaching to more than one group of people in this passage – he preaches to the Jews held in exile in Babylon, who are nearly without hope – all the Jews they ever knew who were exiled never returned to their homeland. They surely picture for themselves a bleak future, and certainly a hard present. But, Isaiah’s tone before this has been mostly punitive, finger shaking, head shaking, scolding. And the tone shifts at this moment – to one of comfort. Peace. The war for the hearts and minds of the people is over. I like to think God softened Isaiah’s heart. The people of Judah the southern kingdom of Israel, had strayed far from God’s purpose. Their kings were corrupt, their people had left behind their faith. And then the Babylonians came, in war, and took away thousands to exile, as slaves mostly. Was God punishing them? We will never know, but Isaiah certainly thought so. But here, the tone changes. Isaiah realizes his purpose, finally. He needed to find his place as chaplain to the people in exile. Not to wag his finger at them, but to lift them up. His job was to uphold them in their own faith system, helping them find their source of strength. Well, maybe you think I’m talking about me and all the chaplains I have known and admired. But I’m not. I’m talking about you. I know you. You have faith. You are loved by God and you know it. So, here in Advent, the beginning of the church year, and the very middle of the worst of the Pandemic we are living through, I am pointing out to you that you have a job to do. You must speak words of comfort to the hurting. You must speak tenderly to them, reminding them that this disease is not a punishment for anything. And that God is holding them, safe. Speak these words to each other friends, right now because for so many this is the worst time of their lives. And for you and me, its just another day at the office. Our whole job as Christians is to show Christ’s love. Again and Again. So, let’s do that. Our work is cut out for us and the folks need to hear it. From you. God bless you and your ministry, Amen. – Pastor Patricia Hughes

WORSHIPPING AT HOME WITH HOLY CROSS
“Waiting Here For You” – an Advent Setting
Third Sunday in Advent
December 13, 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 –ELW254 Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus
Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

1 Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,

dear desire of ev'ry nation,
joy of ev'ry longing heart.

2 Born thy people to deliver,
born a child, and yet a king;
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

Prayer of the Day: Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Readings and Psalm

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Psalm Luke 1:46b-55

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Matthew 1:18-25

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 13, 2020

God of power and might, shine your radiance and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need. God of preachers and messengers, you have entrusted your church with the work of proclaiming good news. Strengthen the witness of all people who contribute their prayers and talents to public worship. Embed your word in their hearts.



God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

God of every living creature, you announce the year of your favor for all of creation. Extend your kindness and relief to endangered animals and plants. Strengthen the human beings who rely on the rhythms of nature to make their living.

God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

God of all peoples and nations, you plant us as your oaks of righteousness and ask us to care for one another. Be present with the leaders of every nation as they govern. Give them a spirit of righteousness, that your goodness and mercy is revealed through their actions.

God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

God of exiles and wanderers, you repair what was once destroyed. We pray for people who have been displaced from their homes by fire, flood, earthquake, or storm, especially Oregon wildfire victims. Support the work of Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response, and all disaster relief organizations in their recovery efforts.

God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. Bestow your spirit upon this congregation and empower us to comfort the people who turn to us in times of need. Make your church a place of refuge and healing.

God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

God of sinners and saints, you offer joy even in the midst of our grief. We are grateful for the beloved, imperfect people whose lives testified to your radiant love. As our community and our world bear the impact of thousands of death by Covid 19, anoint all who mourn with the oil of gladness.

God of abundant grace,

Open your healing hands.

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**