

For Church Weekly Mailing – January 12, 2020

Happy New Year to all. I hope you enjoyed the holidays safely and in good health. In many ways we, as a society, are looking forward to a closure of the events of 2020 and to new beginnings in 2021. Our church is no different. We have many things to do and paths to travel but before we can do either we need to talk and discuss the options before us.

Annually we have a congregational meeting to discuss the past year, review our finances, approve our new spending plan, elect representatives, and chart out our future. Per our church constitution, this meeting is to be held in January of each year, typically the last Sunday of the month. This year the last Sunday of January is on 1/31/2021 and we will hold a short meeting after service in the gym to ratify council actions and approve our budget for spending in 2021.

However, due to the current health concerns and the inability of many of you to attend this meeting in person we are going to do a few things differently this year. Here is our plan.

The Annual Report is being assembled and will be available for you to read comments from your church leadership and committees about 2020 and plans for 2021. It will also contain financial information about our current state at Holy Cross and a budget plan for spending in 2021. If you would like to receive a copy, please contact the church by phone or email and we will arrange pickup or delivery.

Please read the reports and review the budget. Your council members will be working to gather feedback and any questions/concerns you may have. You may always reach out directly to me with any items as well. We have our monthly council meeting on Tuesday, 1/19/21 and will be discussing the agenda for the Annual Meeting and recommendations to adopt the 2021 budget as presented.

I anticipate that the required January Annual Meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> will be short, assuming a quorum is present. Council plans only to seek approval of the budget for 2021 so we can continue to pay bills and salaries. The bulk of the “normal” annual meeting agenda will be conducted in March at a Special Congregational Meeting (tentatively 3/14/21) where we will have a slate of candidates to elect to various positions and have a good discussion about the future of Holy Cross as a sustainable entity on the corner of Sunnyview and Lansing.

We hope to use the time in between the two meetings to talk to many members, gather your thoughts about the future and what you expect Holy Cross to be in one, two, five years down the road. It may also allow us to be in a better environment to meet in person by then or solve some of our technological limits so we can log in to a live meeting online.

Thank you for being understanding as we make changes to our usual process. If we have learned anything in the past year it is that we must be flexible and adapt to new information as it becomes available. If you are interested in obtaining the Annual Report, please contact the church office. Then read it and do not hesitate to reach out to me with your questions.

Your servant in Christ, Bryan Struve, Council President

**Mailout January 12 – Events At Holy Cross coming up! (also check the website [www.holycrosslutheran-salem.org](http://www.holycrosslutheran-salem.org) for updates)**

Every week, (since March) between Friday and Sunday morning, 5 worship opportunities are posted for you – these include a recording of this week's Readings, a recording of this week's Prayers, a piece of music (often by our own musicians) to accompany your worship, as well as a Children's Sermon and a Sermon. Also every week, we mail out to you and post in an email blast, a "Worship at home" sheet for your use. Please let us know if you are having trouble accessing any of these recordings. You can find them on Youtube (Pastor Patricia Hughes is my channel), on our website (see above) and on Holy Cross – Salem Facebook page.

*Thursday, January 14, 12 noon* What is God saying Today in person bible study. Wear masks, be socially distanced, and meet in the skylight room for bible study – if our numbers are larger than 6 we must move to the library. John 1:43-51 (We will study the following Sunday's Gospel)

*Thursday, January 14, 5 pm* What is God saying today Zoom bible study

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84055018008?pwd=SlJHN0lkcWhlUVF3aWE4MkEzV1BRdz09> John 1:43-51 (We will study the following Sunday's Gospel)

*Sunday, January 17, 9:30 am* Worship in the gym RSVP IS REQUIRED. Bring your elements, to share worship in the gym, socially distanced, masks required for the second Sunday after Epiphany

*Monday, January 18th, 2021* Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Office closed for MLK Jr Day

*Tuesday, January 19 9 am – 11 am* Tuesday Crew

*Tuesday, January 19, 6:30 pm* Church Council Church Council meets (Possibly online or in person – to be decided) monthly

*Thursday, January 21, 12 noon* What is God saying Today in person bible study. Wear masks, be socially distanced, and meet in the skylight room for bible study – if our numbers are larger than 6 we must move to the library. Mark 1:14-20 (We will study the following Sunday's Gospel)

*Thursday, January 21, 5 pm* What is God saying today Zoom bible study  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84055018008?pwd=SlJHN0lkcWhlUVF3aWE4MkEzV1BRdz09>

Mark 1:14-20 (We will study the following Sunday's Gospel)

*Sunday, January 24, 12 noon* Drive Up Communion Bring your bread and wine or grape juice, drive up and enjoy socially distanced, and masked Holy Communion for the 3rd Sunday in Epiphany

*Bless you all as your leadership works hard to bring the safest experiences possible for your spiritual life . – Pastor P+*

## WORSHIPPING AT HOME WITH HOLY CROSS

Second Sunday of Epiphany

January 17, 2021

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
whose voice is upon the waters,  
whose mercy is poured out upon all people,  
whose goodness cascades over all creation.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the abundant grace of God.  
Holy God,

**you search us and know us.**

**You are acquainted with all our ways.**

**We confess that our hearts are burdened by sin—  
our own sins and the broken systems that bind us.**

**We turn inward, failing to follow  
your outward way of love.**

**We distrust those who are not like us.**

**We exploit the earth and its resources  
and fail to consider generations to come.**

**Forgive us, gracious God,**

**for all we have done and left undone.**

**Even before the words are on our tongues,  
you know them;**

**receive them in your divine mercy.**

**Amen.**

How vast is God's grace!

Through the power and promise of † Christ Jesus,  
our sins are washed away

and we are claimed as God's own beloved.

Indeed, we are forgiven.

In the wake of God's forgiveness,

we are called to be the beloved community  
living out Christ's justice

and the Spirit's reconciling peace.

**Amen.**

## **GATHERING HYMN – ELW 574 Here I Am, Lord**

- 1 "I, the Lord of sea and sky,  
I have heard my people cry.  
All who dwell in dark and sin  
my hand will save.  
I, who made the stars of night,  
I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear my light to them?  
Whom shall I send?"
- Refrain*  
Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard you calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.  
I will hold your people in my heart.
- 2 "I, the Lord of snow and rain,  
I have borne my people's pain.  
I have wept for love of them.  
They turn away.  
I will break their hearts of stone,  
give them hearts for love alone.  
I will speak my word to them.  
Whom shall I send?" *Refrain*
- 3 "I, the Lord of wind and flame,  
I will tend the poor and lame.  
I will set a feast for them.  
My hand will save.  
Finest bread I will provide  
till their hearts be satisfied.  
I will give my life to them.  
Whom shall I send?" *Refrain*

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, most merciful redeemer, for the countless blessings and benefits you give. May we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day praising you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **READINGS AND PSALM**

### **1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20]**

*The calling of Samuel*

### **Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18**

You have searched me out and known me. (*Ps. 139:1*)

### **1 Corinthians 6:12-20**

*Glorify God in your body*

### **John 1:43-51**

*The calling of the first disciples*

## **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**

O God,  
receive these gifts as you receive us:  
like a mother receives her child, with arms open wide.  
Nourish us anew in your tender care,  
and empower us in faithful service  
to tend to others with this same love,  
through Jesus Christ, our saving grace. **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**

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Christ Jesus,  
at this table we have feasted on your very life  
and are strengthened for our journey.  
Send us forth from this banquet  
nourished in body and in spirit  
to proclaim your good news  
and serve others in your name.  
**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**

God the creator strengthen you;  
Jesus the beloved fill you;  
and the Holy Spirit the comforter † keep you in peace.  
**Amen.**

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**Jesus and His Baptism** - Advent, Christmas and Epiphany are behind us – Christians in the world have taken time to commemorate the birth of Jesus into the world – as a human, living and breathing, and eating and playing and everything just like a human. And his ministry in the world is the next step – Marks gospel begins here – actually with a 3 verse preamble - 1The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:“Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight”’. In 3 short verse we have shifted from the babe in a manger, adored and worshipped, to the ministry of the grown man Jesus, who is announced, and previewed by the unusual and important John the Baptist his cousin, who has been living as a zealot in the wilderness eating locusts and wild honey preparing for this his most important job – introducing Jesus, the son of God.

I feel like we should all stand as we read these verses. These next 8 verses put all the majesty, all the miracle that is Jesus into words, which shake us up, and change the world. And this year, as I read them, I saw them a little differently, and I wanted to talk to you about that. John is baptizing in the Jordan, and Jesus enters without any fanfare - 9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

Let’s stop here – when I read a novel, often it is perspective that gives me information – is the story told from the perspective of the star of the story? Is it told by someone else? Is it 3<sup>rd</sup> person, removed – more like a narrator or reporter of the story? Well, you can see this is a third person report, but that’s not all I see. Verse 10 – And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart. We’ve almost shifted perspective now – we’re seeing what Jesus sees – just as he was coming up out of the water – he saw the heavens torn apart. This word torn apart is unusual – it means to cleave, separate into two parts – it seems like a visceral event – not just split like a banana – but torn. And, friends, this year, as I read this I felt like Jesus might have felt as he came up out of the water and watched the heavens tear apart. Have you ever felt like that? That you’ve got a front seat to the fabric of life coming apart? I know I have felt that way this year – first as we lived through months and months of death and fear and isolation and loss due to the pandemic. And now as we suffer political unrest and insurrection at the seat of government? The heavens torn apart seems to fit the situation we find ourselves in. So, Jesus has just been dunked by John under the water, comes up, having taken the first public step in his ministry – and sees a great tearing in fabric of the heavens – *“I felt a great disturbance in the Force, as if millions of voices suddenly cried out in terror and were suddenly silenced. I fear something terrible has happened.* You ever feel like that? I sure have. I felt it when my husband Gary died, I felt it when I watched the film of Hurricane Katrina destroying the whole ninth ward of New Orleans, I felt it when I saw armed domestic terrorists attempt to subvert the peaceful transition of power in our country. Jesus knows what we feel like when we have those moments. He felt it that day, I think Mark tells us that, when he came up out of the water. And then, God the father speaks -maybe just to him, we don’t know, and I don’t think it matters - 11And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’

You hear that? God speaks directly to this frightened, shaken, wet man. You are the beloved – with you I am well pleased. You and I are not Jesus, we are not the savior of the world. But, just as Jesus is comforted when confronted with the terror of what’s in front of him, God comforts us now – You are my beloved. With you I am well pleased. God loves you folks. God is in control. God will give you the bravery, the strength, the will to take the stands you must in the days ahead, if we are to return to a more perfect union here in America. You must as we attempt to feed the starving, comfort the grieving, and accompany the frightened. The heavens are torn apart – in our lifetimes, folks. And you know it. But God is with you. Just as God was with the beloved Son. Be at peace. Amen. – Pastor Patricia Hughes

**Praying together at Holy Cross –**

**January 17, 2021- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Epiphany**

Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church and for all the world. We offer particular prayers for the United States in this time of upheaval and fear. Show us the way forward with righteous men and women willing to stand for truth and fairness, while caring for the needy and comforting the fearful.



Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

For the well-being of creation, for plants and animals, and for all that God has marvelously made, that we serve as wise stewards of Earth, our home,

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

For police officers and firefighters, for attorneys and paralegals, for peacekeepers and military personnel, and for the leaders of governments, that they provide protection to all people, especially the most vulnerable,

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

For those lacking food or shelter, for those who are sick or grieving, especially those ill and suffering with Covid-19, and for those who are imprisoned or homebound, that God console all who suffer,

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

For our neighborhood, for all who participate in worship in the various ways we offer, that all who seek to know God are nourished by word and sacrament,

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Amen.**



**GOALS  
CALLS  
ME...**

