

2/16/2021 - What a week, right?

Praying for all those affected by ice and bad weather. Lots of folks without power and many people worried. Please know you are in my heart! – Pastor Patricia

Wednesday, 2/17/2021 – Ash Wednesday (we are still punting on this one – stay tuned) Vigil planned for 3 – 6 pm. Call the office to make sure of our plans.

Thursday, 2/18/2021 - What is God Saying Today Bible study at 12 noon in person at Holy Cross, and at 5 pm on Zoom . We will cover Mark 1:9-15

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84055018008?pwd=SlJHN0lkZWlUVF3aWE4MkEzV1BRdz09>

Meeting ID: 840 5501 8008 Passcode: 569519

Sunday, 2/21/2021 – First Sunday in Lent – We will proceed with our planned Drive Up Communion at 12 noon. Please bring bread and wine or grape juice. Line up at church, maybe a little early like 11:45 if you want to be early in line!

Next week, on **Wednesday, February 24th at 6 pm** we will begin using the Worship Folder included in your envelope today – “Created for Community” a meaningful mid-week worship that you can join on zoom or you can enjoy it alone anytime at all – I suggest you have a candle handy, and your bible. God created us for Community – not just to “hang out” with others but to work together, care together and change the world together. As much as I miss in person worship coffee hour and get togethers, it is the coming together to change the world around us that is certainly God’s will for us.

See you on zoom next Wednesday – or enjoy the worship service alone when you like. Patricia Hughes is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting. Every week on Wed, until Mar 24, 2021, 5 occurrence(s)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89578947810?pwd=ZWZWT2NXcjZlNk9rMXRwZm9GTHIzZz09> Meeting ID: 895 7894 7810 Passcode: 611757

We hope you are enjoying the articles that our council members and other leaders are writing as we engage our church family in conversation about What’s Next?

Beyond The Present The Future Awaits

The past should always be considered in the scheme of things for the future. I want to thank Carolyn Ford, Christina Greer and Sarah Schultz for their thoughts and sharing some of their experiences working with the youth. They have been very helpful in getting this article written.

At this time the steps being thought about in what the future holds for Holy Cross Lutheran Church are not decided and voted upon. One suggestion is to merge with another church and share a pastor. Also, the possibility of our pastor having one Sunday off a month and another pastor filling in. There are other options available for use such as recorded video of a service by our church or another source, the future is still in discussion and solutions for the best direction for Holy Cross as a whole.

Sanctuary involvement for the Youth: As in the past there will be options for our youth of all ages to take part in the worship service. When the virus is under control and we can once again use the Sanctuary for worship services. Examples: Helping with communion, participation in plays about stories from the Bible, musical opportunities, passing the jingle jars for donations for a worthy cause selected by the Youth, etc.

Confirmation Classes for the youth teaches the beliefs of the Lutheran Church. At the end of the classes, they are confirmed and presented to the congregation.

Sunday school has always been a good way for children to learn about the Bible on their own level and to socialize with other children.

The older youth have formed a group called FLY. This group has two other churches along with ours. A youth leader or leaders help to plan activities, gatherings, mission trips, church camps, etc. The FLY plan ways to get donations for the above by having car washes, serving, and cooking meals and other ways to raise funds. Hopefully, this group will start being more active and grow as the virus gets under control.

Currently Holy Cross church is holding bi-weekly services in the gym, keeping the required rules that allow a limited number of people to be there wearing a mask and seating at six feet apart. Families can sit together and be the required six feet apart from others. Also, a bi-weekly drive through communion is taking place. Several of the youth have been attending with their parents.

Weekly mailings are going out to the youth with activities and learning more about the Bible in them. Zoom is also available for listening to a children's sermon and recorded music for their worship and pleasure. All of these are very helpful to keep connected to each other. Our youth are so important to us and the future of our church. Please pray for them and the future of our church.

Respectfully, Patricia Bryant

**Praying together at Holy Cross – February 21, 2021-
First Sunday of Lent**

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need. In Jesus your realm has come near to us in every place and time. Give your church throughout the world a spirit of humility and repentance; teach us to trust always in the good news of your salvation.



Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You have made a covenant of mercy with every living creature. Protect all the earth's creatures from destruction. Empower the work of biologists, conservationists, and science educators.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

All your paths are steadfast love and faithfulness. Direct the words and actions of leaders in our community and throughout the world, that they may maintain justice for the lowly.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Even in the wilderness you are with us. Walk alongside migrants and refugees crossing dangerous lands. Tend to those whose lives feel desolate. Give healing and strength to all who suffer.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In the covenant of baptism you claim us as beloved children. Nurture us in our baptismal identity and teach us to live within it for the sake of others. Strengthen this congregation's ministries of care and concern.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In baptism you join us to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We praise you for all those who have died trusting in your faithfulness. Bring us with them to the fullness of your reign.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Sermon for 2/14/2021 - Have you ever thought that Lent is kind of an insider thing? Only Church going people really know what's going on. I was born in New Orleans, and Mardi Gras is very well known of course, as a time of revelry and kind 'blowing off steam' before Lent comes – for hundreds of years people have given up luxuries and extravagances during Lent – meat is a big one people give up especially on Fridays. But, before you give all that up, there's a tradition of partying a bit – stuffing yourself, etc. I like overeating as much as the next person, but what makes me the happiest about the coming of Lent is the Sunday before – this Sunday, The Feast of the Transfiguration. It's a mountaintop experience. With Jesus. Hard to beat that image. The reading from Mark 9 has Jesus climbing a mountain with 3 of the disciples, Peter, James and John. It doesn't say why. For me, it doesn't have to. During this year long pandemic, one of the activities that my husband Joe and I have done to stay relatively sane is to go on walks. With the dogs of course. Outdoors there's little chance of us contracting the virus from someone else. We even take our masks off and put them in our pockets, unless we're somewhere with a lot of people. Its very freeing to be out and about without the constraints of this current time – masks, social distancing, no hugging. No touching at all. But, outside, on our walks, I feel the breeze on my face, and taste the tang of rain coming sometimes in the air. Sometimes we talk, but more often we are quiet, enjoying the feeling of being one with God's world. Free. And so the 3 disciples and Jesus walk up this mountain together. I imagine them feeling like we do, happy to be out, enjoying God's creation. And then Elijah and Moses are suddenly there, and Jesus is transfigured before them. His clothes are dazzling white, and he is chatting with these two giants of the old testament, giants in faithful service to God. And Peter, sweet, always putting his foot in his mouth Peter says, "Rabbi, it is good to be here. Let us build 3 dwelling places for you, and Elijah, and Moses and just stay here." Sure, its good to be there on the mountaintop with your teacher, Jesus, and the two giants of the faith, Elijah prophet who foretold that God would save his people, and Moses, who takes God's message of physical salvation to the Israelites, and leads them out to freedom. Can't Peter just enjoy this moment? Can't he soak up this moment in the sun with his teacher and talk later? No, apparently, he can't. I understand Peter. Talking when he should be just experiencing, noticing the glory that is surrounding him that day on the mountain. This is the Feast of the Transfiguration – and why I enjoy going to church and being transcendent for a bit, letting the music swell, and feeling that ripple in the sanctuary of a whole group of people praying at the same time. Touched by the truth of who Jesus is – the Son of God. That's what God is giving them that morning – a touch of the truth – Jesus who walks and lives with them is more than just a guy giving great advice for life – Love your neighbor, give to the poor, and great examples for life – he feeds the hungry, heals the sick and comforts the lonely. We are invited to behave the same way, and follow his example. Not just because they are good ideas, but because Jesus is God's Son, and he will do the will of God, all the way to the end of the line, where the sinfulness and selfishness of humanity will finally kill him, painfully, on the cross. I must admit I don't think I want to follow Jesus to a painful death for all the world. But I am not called to do so, and neither are you. Jesus stepped up. As the Son of God, with all the power – power enough to stand on the mountain transfigured with Elijah and Moses, he chose not to use that power to save himself, and so the whole world was changed. For you. For me. The Transfiguration is that moment when the power of God is on display for us all. As we move into Lent, we touch instead the immensity of what Jesus does for us on Good Friday. On clear days in our corner of the Willamette Valley in Oregon, I can see Mount Hood, and Mount Jefferson and Mount Saint Helens. And I always smile. For an instant I am on those peaks, breathing in the cool, crisp air and slowly taking in the whole vista around me. Transfiguration is like that. You can see Easter from here, and the valley of Lent is just ahead. Breathe in the joy of being in God's presence, won't you? Stay safe. Get out of the house and marvel at God's majesty. Jesus is God's Son – no more, no less. We are blessed. Amen. – Pastor Patricia Hughes