

Council Thoughts from Gail Struve:

**Music and the space we create in our worship** is one of the most important pieces to our worship, our communion with God and our relationship with each other. When done well, music becomes the breath of God and creates wholeness for our gatherings. Music is one of the strengths of our worship at Holy Cross and has always been led with talent and care, so much so that many parishioners are able to focus on the spiritual connection and not the logistics of how it is done.

Other than the musicians who are involved with planning, choir members, organists, and sound assistants, do the parishioners who come to worship really know what it takes to organize, prepare and problem solve? Do you, as you read this, notice the work and efforts that go behind the beauty? Don't get me wrong, those of us involved in anything related to our music at church have received many thanks and appreciation for the gifts of our music and we are happy to share our love of music with the congregation. But love of music and talent alone do need additional support, planning and some level of technology.

This past year was not unique in terms of the musicians at Holy Cross working on creative ideas to continue providing music for our worship. Before Covid-19, we had used music in creative ways during worship and tried to provide variety including use of the organ, piano, guitar, handbells, voice choir, soloists and special instrumental solos such as violin, flute and brass instruments on occasion. We have also worked on speakers and sound system improvements for the sanctuary prior to Covid-19. Occasionally we had even had worship with piano and handbells in the Gym.

This year, creativity, faith, patience and flexibility were tested for all the musicians at Holy Cross due to Covid-19. Choir sang with masks on to record music, 6 feet away from each other, 30 feet from anyone in line with their voice and only sang as a solo for any in-person worship whether inside or outside. We held on to our faith and hope by a thread for better days when we can sing with our shoulders touching again and without the mask being sucked into our mouths as we take breaths between phrases. Yet we have persevered, offering what we can, and fighting through the discomforts to give whatever we could, because those discomforts pale in comparison to what Jesus did for us, and we love music that much.... that we will work through struggles just to share it.

We are without a permanent organist at Holy Cross currently and maybe that has gone almost unnoticed with the chaos of Covid-19 and worshipping outside and in the gym. We have enjoyed having Tim Bibleheimer play the organ on a couple occasions, but we have only been able to have the organ played a couple times this past year. Sheila and I are currently starting to share the playing of piano for services, which works for now with only 2 services per month indoors. We are happy to continue for a little while, but for how long? I know that Sheila and I are thinking of new ideas for how we support voices with piano and organ. We will figure things out as we go, but as life moves forward, we ask for continued grace, patience, flexibility and creativity....and a whole lot of prayer. Can you help us also imagine some new things and new ideas?

We also dealt with challenges of technology and stretched our equipment as far as we could with what and who we had available. There have been unique challenges in placing speakers outside that covered both the courtyard and parking lot last summer, and indoors connecting and finding enough

cords to run the length of the gym to connect to the amps and speakers while maintaining a 30-foot distance from the singer to the congregation (a necessary precaution for COVID-19). Our sound equipment was enough to cover meetings and the sanctuary for how we have conducted worship and meetings in the past, pre-COVID. It was barely enough to cover what we need for “distanced” worship.

We currently do provide recordings of our services with a personal video camera that is later downloaded to the internet, thanks to Gary Strand and we have recordings of Sermons and prayers from pastor through her Microsoft Surface. Honestly for equipment that is easily accessible it is not too bad for making things work, but I think if we were to imagine longer term and future technology, we would explore more professional equipment that would give us more possibilities.

Wouldn't it be nice to have equipment that could provide a high-quality live stream to the internet, web site and social media? What about monitors that could show that live feed to parents in the nursery, parishioners in the narthex who need some separate space or are setting up coffee for fellowship after service? Those are just a couple things to technology to consider that could enhance our worship, increase accessibility to our worship and simplify our processes (it takes time after recording to download the content to the internet). We also get by with the technology at our church because we have just enough human resources to make it work, but perhaps we need to explore and research the possibilities of new sound and video technology, and who is going to do that? Pastor is already giving so much of her time and although she has learned new technology to help us record, her primary focus is Pastoral ministry, not Information Technology Manager.

We have faith that this way of current worship is still temporary, even though it feels a lot longer than temporary, but if you were to imagine this as a longer-term situation or permanent, would our technology be enough?

We do not know what the future holds for Holy Cross, how long it will be for “normal worship” to fully return (meaning every Sunday in the sanctuary), or what changes we may have in our music program as the future unfolds. To many in our congregation we just want to be back in our comfortable pews, listening to the music and singing along to familiar hymns. Yet we know that we must also grow and change.

As we take steps this spring to gradually have a presence back in our sanctuary, let us return as new children of God, resting in his comfort with healing, hope and vision.

With love and peace,

Gail Struve

## **Created for Community – Lent at Holy Cross, 2021 – Week 2**

***This lent, our focus is on community – Do we have a responsibility to be God's representatives in the community around us?***

### **Events and more at Holy Cross March 2, 2021**

*Your Council has been hard at work writing articles weekly about the transitions facing Holy Cross in the future. Won't you think about your vision for Holy Cross in the future? Part 2 of our Annual Meeting will be on **Sunday, March 14<sup>th</sup> following 9:30 worship (so we'll start about 10:15am!)**. Re read the Council letters, won't you and be ready to talk about your vision going forward. **It's not too early to call the office and RSVP for worship and the meeting on March 14<sup>th</sup>!***

*The Nominating Committee has a slate of names for us to vote on for the upcoming openings in Council. We will install the newly elected Council on May 2, 2021. We will also elect Synod Assembly representatives (April 30 and May 1), as well as Nominating Committee members for next year.*

**Here's your link for the Wednesday Lenten Worship (same link every week)** Topic: Created for Community: Lenten Wednesdays at Holy Cross

**Time: March 3, 2021 06:00 PM** Pacific Time

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89578947810?pwd=ZWZWT2NXcjZlNk9rMXRwdm9GTHlZz09> Meeting ID: 895 7894 7810 Passcode: 611757

We mailed the Lenten worship folder out last week – you can use it every week – either Alone, or on the zoom worship. Either choice is a fine choice.

**Thursday, This week, What is God Saying Today?** Will cover John 2:13-22. Join us at noon in person (socially distanced, masks required) or at 5 pm on Zoom. Topic: What is God Saying today? **Time March 4, 2021 05:00 PM**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84055018008?pwd=SlJHN0lkcWhlUVF3aWE4MkEzV1BRdz09> Meeting ID: 840 5501 8008 Passcode: 569519

**Sunday, March 7th at noon–Drive Up Communion! - masked and bring your own bread and wine. We enjoy seeing each other in vehicles, and receiving Holy Communion together**

Don't forget Easter Dinner is coming up – RSVP to the office won't you? Individually packaged, and delivered to your car (or home if you make arrangements) – God's blessings to you from Sheila and Daniel Clausen, facilitated by a Thrivent grant. Many blessings to you always! – Pastor P

**What Return Can I Make?** What I miss most are the conversations. These pandemic months have been hard on all of us – and of course, our isolation is really small potatoes when you think of the 500,000 dead, and all their families who grieve. And, the list goes on- families impacted by job loss due to the pandemic, folks who have had evictions postponed by law, will someday, inevitably be confronted with all those past due bills. What will happen to them? So, I feel pretty selfish when I tell you I miss conversations with you all. But miss them I do. I miss hearing your perspectives on caring for your neighbors, I miss the stories you tell about the way you serve your community. One of the facets of my job as your pastor, is to reflect back to you the issues you are struggling with, and also to bring up intersections of your life and character that you haven't thought of yet sometimes in a sermon. But I don't conjure those sermons out of thin air – they grow out of the scripture God gave us and my conversations and interactions with all of you, as well as our neighbors. In my workweek as your pastor, I am beginning to have small moments with folks – at bible study – Wednesday Lenten worship on zoom – recording music and readings with some of you. And I am thankful. We were not created to live a life where our thoughts only bounce around inside our own skulls. Relationship is a key factor in becoming faithful followers of Christ. Our Gospel for today could be titled – inside and outside Peter's head. This account takes place during Jesus' ministry in Galilee – where he's been healing and feeding and preaching to thousands – he's a rock star, and the crowds are big, and the disciples are in awe of being part of Jesus' inner circle. But Jesus pauses in this victory lap to tell the disciples privately that the time is coming when he will suffer and be rejected by the chief priests and scribes, be killed and rise again in 3 days. Peter stops him, pulls him aside, and says this isn't the message we want – stop talking like this. And Jesus shuts him down. Get behind me Satan, you are missing the whole point of this ministry. Its hard to watch this interchange, because we have all been Peter at some point, haven't we – when we have been so focused on our own discomfort that we miss the point – Jesus life death and resurrection brings the realization that following our savior means being focused on others, and not ourselves. This rebuke is so painful to watch, that its easy to stop here, and not read on in this Gospel, but we must. Because Jesus takes this moment of stopping Peter cold in his misunderstanding of the mission of the Son of Man, that he turns to the entire crowd that is following him, who've been loving the healing, and the feeding and preaching, to clue them all in on the life changing message of Jesus the Christ. That message is about others. What does it profit a person to gain the whole world and forfeit their life. "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. The cross is a well-known method of executing anyone who opposes the Roman empire in Jesus' day. Jesus saying, Take up their cross would be a vivid image – of risking opposing the most powerful entity in the world. This ministry of Jesus in Galilee with all the healing, all the feeding, is about more than just good vibrations – good feelings – its about community. Do you see that? Jesus says, Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? As we have each experienced these losses this year – the loss of human interaction with our friends and neighbors, and have grieved that loss, can we as a congregation, and as individuals recognize with Peter, that the point of that human connection isn't the good feelings it gives us, the point is what return can I make? This planet is populated with millions of people, each loved and cherished by the God who made them. How can my interaction with the world reflect God's love? What return can I make? What is the goal of this transaction of connection with others? Is it just my own enjoyment of the interaction? Or is there more? During this pandemic, I miss the conversations, with you, with our neighbors, with people I have never met before. As we begin to reclaim interpersonal connections, as vaccinations proliferate, and we tentatively move towards contact and connections with people, can this be our goal? Not just the relief and joy we feel at connecting with others again, but a true recognition that our purpose on this earth as followers of Christ is to see, and feel what our neighbors experience, and begin to plan what return can I make as a follower of Jesus? Amen.- Pastor Patricia Hughes, Holy Cross Lutheran

2/28/2021

# Family Promise 2020 Year in Review

Here is a summary of what we did together with other congregations in 2020:

**Impact in 2020:** Family Promise had to change its model in March of 2020 due to COVID-19. We were no longer in the congregations, but in motels. Soon the Day Center was converted over to a shelter, and we **rented Madison House** so we could maintain safe distancing protocols for the families. The **wildfires** came in September and put more stress on families with insecure housing. Congregations stepped up and helped 7 families instead of the usual 4 during the months of November and December, ensuring more families were safe and warm. Despite all the challenges 2020 had to offer, we as Family Promise were able to give **one-time assistance to 250 people** and help **another 250 people** with CARES funding. We also kept **163 people stable** in current housing, a 96% success rate. We found that the average family we helped was \$1100 behind on rent and \$300 behind on utilities.

**Returning to IHN model:** Gauging from the current progress in vaccinations, Family Promise do not foresee a return to our original IHN model in the next few months. We anticipate that at some time in the summer we will begin the process of **recruitment**, looking for commitment from the volunteers, the pastoral leadership, and the lay representation from each congregation. We won't start up the rotation process until **13 congregations** are ready to move forward. In this process we will visit, listen, present, and inform, working together to achieve our goal of housing children and their families. We will also look for **partnership congregations** to help existing congregations with the work.

## Family Highlights of 2020:

**William and Banesa:** This past year we helped a family of 8 find housing, not something easily accomplished in the best of times. It took several months, but William and Banesa and their 6 kids are in their own home in the valley.

**Newborns:** Tyler was born while his family lived in a car. Kwan-Yin was born during the wildfires. Both infants' first safe shelter was with Family Promise. Both families have since found permanent homes.

**Paying Forward:** Another family, Alexis & Robert with their daughter Rayleigh found a place to live through Family Promise. A couple months later they showed their appreciation by helping Kwan-Yin's family move into the same apartment complex.

**Connections:** With COVID restrictions, volunteers primarily encouraged and inspired families by preparing meals. When Maxwell and his family moved on from IHN they said they would **miss the meals the most**. Volunteers also acknowledged birthdays and Christmas, put encouraging notes in with the meals, sponsored pizza nights, gave a special day at Waterfront Park complete with carousel rides, and provided Chromebooks so the children could attend school.

**Write-a-Letter:** You can write a letter or post a video that encourages our families on their path to a stable home. Go to our website and look under the Get Involved tab, or use this link:

<https://www.familypromisemwv.org/write-a-letter>

## WORSHIPPING AT HOME WITH HOLY CROSS

Third Sunday in Lent

March 7, 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 324 “In the Cross of Christ I Glory”**

- 1 In the cross of Christ I glory,  
tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time.  
All the light of sacred story  
gathers round its head sublime.
- 2 When the woes of life o'ertake me,  
hopes deceive, and fears annoy,  
never shall the cross forsake me;  
lo, it glows with peace and joy.
- 3 When the sun of bliss is beaming  
light and love upon my way,  
from the cross the radiance streaming  
adds more luster to the day.
- 4 Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,  
by the cross are sanctified;  
peace is there that knows no measure,  
joys that through all time abide.

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

Holy God, through your Son you have called us to live faithfully and act courageously. Keep us steadfast in your covenant of grace, and teach us the wisdom that comes only 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**

#### **Exodus 20:1-17**

*The commandments are given at Sinai*

#### **Psalms 19**

The commandment of the LORD gives light to the eyes. (Ps. 19:8)

#### **1 Corinthians 1:18-25**

*Christ crucified, the wisdom of God*

#### **John 2:13-22**

*The cleansing of the temple*

### **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.**

**Praying together at Holy Cross – March 7, 2021 – Third  
Sunday of Lent**

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need. There is no God before you. Purify the faith of your church, that your people place their trust in nothing beside you. Your name is holy. Guide your church, that in every situation your people's words and actions honor your name.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

The heavens declare your glory. Renew your creation. Provide leaders in the struggle for clean air and water; protect creatures and crops that rely on healthy ecosystems; give all people the willingness to repent when our way of life pollutes the earth and skies.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Your foolishness is wiser than human wisdom. Fill leaders with the foolishness of your peace and mercy. Your law defends the vulnerable. Work through legislators, judicial systems, and systems of law enforcement to protect the wellbeing and freedom of all.

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Your weakness is stronger than human strength. Protect those who are vulnerable and give courage to all who are suffering. Defend victims of crime and bring redemption to those who have harmed others. Give sabbath rest to all who labor. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You call us to proclaim Christ crucified. Give clarity to this congregation and our leaders, so that we might follow Christ beyond our own habits and comfort. Clear out anything in our common life that would obscure the gospel or that serves our own interests.

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.**

