



HOLY CROSS

LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

ENCOURAGING THOSE WHO HUNGER
to be nourished by God.

December at a Glance

Check out what's happening in worship, growth, service, and community at Holy Cross this month.

Christmas Gift of Prayer

Philippians 1:18-26 "Yes, and I will rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again."

Paul and Prayer

In the Scripture, Paul recognizes the prayers of the saints at Philippi. Normally Paul has prayers for the saints, but here he rejoices that the saints are praying for him. Although Paul's situation is a lot more dire as he fears he will be dying and going to be with the Lord, he rejoices at the opportunity to be with the Christians there. Paul's prayer is answered as he can write the congregation and long to be with them in person.

God's Gifts at Christmas

At Christmas, Christians are always reminded of God the Father's gracious giving nature that He gave us His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, to be born! God is a giver by nature, but He would not entitle us in our sin. He had to take care of our problem of being separated from Him by our sin and that would take His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross as a complete atonement and for Him to rise resurrected as proof of this justification. We now trust in Christ as our Savior and God the Father treats us 100% as His beloved children, just like Jesus Christ! On top of all these gifts that we might celebrate at Christmas, we also marvel at the gift of prayer that He gives us. We, His children, can come to Him at any time in prayer knowing that our Father graciously listens to us and answers our prayers according to His good and gracious will!

The Gift of Answered and Unanswered Prayer

As many of you have experienced in your own lives, God answers prayers! But praying as a child of God is not like ordering something from Amazon or getting something out of a vending machine. We ask God for our needs, wants, and desires in prayer but our Father sometimes has a different view and will than ours. He says for us to ask Him in prayer, to expect His will to be good, and then to patiently wait for Him to

(Continued on page 2)

answer. God gives us a gracious gift of answered prayer! We don't deserve it, but God loves to give gifts to His children! Sometimes, though, God is gracious when He doesn't answer prayer. And that is a difficulty in which we His children greatly struggle. We cry out to God in joy or need, but God our Heavenly Father, in His gracious will, does not give us what we ask. Only through perspective, time, and sometimes continued trust do we gain a measure of understanding the good and gracious will of our heavenly Father in not answering our prayers.

The Gift of Waiting in Prayer

There is another gift God gives us in prayer and that is the waiting. Getting what you ask for and not getting what you ask for is sometimes a gift in itself as you know the Lord's will in the situation. But asking the Lord continually for something and waiting for His answer is sometimes even more difficult. You don't immediately know what the Lord will give you in His gracious will. So, you pray, you wait, and you remind yourself that your heavenly Father is good and gracious, that you are His child in Jesus Christ, and that He knows the very best for you and for others around you. So, you continue in your prayers as you started, in faith in Jesus Christ that you are saved, you are loved, you are a child of God and that He graciously loves you more than you can see.

Thank You for Your Gift of Prayer!

It has been 8 months since I was Called to be your pastor. In those 8 months, we and so many of you have prayed for our house to sell and for us to get a blessing home for our family and congregation. Our family thought that our prayers would be answered quickly, but that was not the Lord's will. We thought that the fall would offer a new opportunity for our house to sell in the Lord's will. But it was only as we took our house off the market to wait out the dry season of the holidays that we received an answer from the Lord that our house would sell and is now under contract. Praise God and thank you so much for your prayers over these last months! I know so many of you prayed diligently for us in this situation and your prayers, in the waiting and God answering, have been a great gift and comfort to our whole family. Thank you!

What is Next?

So, as I'm writing this, our family is going through the process of finding our blessing home trying to keep an eye on our present, future and unseen needs and wants. We are asking the Lord's Spirit to guide us through this next step as well. God willing, we will go under contract with our blessing home right after Thanksgiving so that we can coincide selling and buying our home at the end of December. This will give us the blessing of moving right after Christmas with minimal difficulties. After that, we will be moving all of our stuff from our current home and out of storage to nest in our new blessing home. A lot of you have offered to help, and once we know the situation we will let you know. Until then, please rejoice with us in the waiting, the answered prayer, and the upcoming blessing of our move. And continue to pray as we reach the end of this chapter of our journey with you, our brothers and sisters at Holy Cross.

The Gift that Keeps on Giving

As you have prayed for us and are still praying for us, I would ask that you continue to pray for members of our congregation and our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world. Answered and unanswered prayer as well as the waiting in between is a gift from God that strengthens His children to trust Him in the process of prayer! Please continue to pray for your own families through faith in Christ. Please continue to pray for your brothers and sisters at Holy Cross. Please continue to pray for fellow siblings in our Synod and our relatives in Christ around the world. Please pray for the stranger and your neighbor as God connects you to them. And please pass along your prayer requests to others. The gift of prayer is not only for the person you are praying for but also for you as you rejoice in their answered prayer, as you comfort them in their unanswered prayers, and as you share with them patience while they wait in prayer.

Rejoicing in God's Gift of Prayer,
Pastor Zillinger

Note from the President

Nathan Borchers



During this time of giving thanks, I am extremely thankful for Holy Cross, its members, Pastor, church workers and school workers. The Board of Directors continues to work on several initiatives including our 60th anniversary celebration next summer. We are also closely monitoring our budget as we wrap up 2024 and look forward to 2025. We are still wrestling with a monthly budget update format, but should have something in place by the next monthly newsletter. Very special thank you to board members who have finished their terms and will not be coming back next year: BOD: Cheryl Dempsey; BOLM: Kevin Hein, Kevin Diekelman, and Gordon Weldon Jr.

Let me close by wishing everyone the very best this Christmas Season!

Yours in Christ,
Nathan

Holy Cross, a community that's transformed through genuine **WORSHIP** so all may follow him.



Worship Schedule

We offer two services with education time in between:

8 a.m. - Hymnal liturgy and hymns with the organ

9:15 a.m. - Short "grab and go" refreshments in Hiller Hall

9:30 a.m. - Christian Education Hour (Sunday School/Adult Bible Study)

10:30 a.m. - Food and Fellowship in Hiller Hall

11 a.m. - Creative Worship liturgy and songs and hymns led by the worship team

Poinsettias for Christmas

If you'd like to purchase a poinsettia to beautify the sanctuary for Christmas, they will be **\$10** this year. You can sign up and make payment at the Ministry Center. Poinsettias may be taken home after Christmas services have finished.



December Worship

8 a.m. or 11 a.m.

Sundays

Join us in person or online on YouTube or Facebook to worship Jesus at 8 a.m. or 11 a.m. on Sundays.

Communion is offered at all services.

December 1: First Sunday in Advent

Pastor Zillinger; "Face Time"; 1 Thessalonians 3:5-13

December 8: Second Sunday in Advent

Pastor Zillinger; "Tell of His Awesome Deeds"; Psalm 66

December 15: Third Sunday in Advent

Pastor Zillinger; "Rejoice! The Lord is King!"; Philippians 4:4-7

December 22: Fourth Sunday in Advent

Pastor Zillinger; "Magnificat"; Luke 1:39-56

Altar Flowers

The **2025** sign up sheet is on the copy room door if you'd like to sign up to recognize a special anniversary, birthday, or other event or to remember someone who has passed or just because. We have had to **increase the cost to \$30**, and you may take the arrangement home after the service. We ask that the flower container be returned to the office when the flowers are done.



Greeters Needed

We could use some extra help greeting our friends, neighbors, and members at services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Contact Cheryl Dempsey or Bev Smith. We will also have a sign up sheet at the Ministry Center.

Self-Serve Photo Booth

Be on the lookout for a special holiday backdrop that will be set up in the Fireside Room for you to take pictures of your family at Christmas. If you need to update your church directory photo or add one, maybe you could send a copy to Christine at christineb@holycrosscs.org.

Pastor's Page

There is a page on our website with information about Pastor Z, his current Bible study, and a link to a daily devotion video he creates, Monday through Friday.

- Mondays - A recap of Sunday's sermon
- Tuesdays - Dig deeper into the Psalms
- Wednesdays - A look at *Luther's Small Catechism*
- Thursdays - Open Topics
- Fridays - A preview of Sundays texts

Prayer Room in Room 223

Come in to our prayer room anytime during business hours (M-F, 9-3) to find a quiet place to pray. The prayer team would like to invite you to join them on Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. to pray for our church, our community, country, and others.



Advent Services

Wednesdays at 11:30 and 7:15

December 4 - Bread of Life,

December 11 - Rock of Ages,

December 18 - Light of the World

(Identical traditional service for both times; 11:30 livestreamed)

Join us for Advent services as we are reminded that Jesus came to us on Christmas as the **Word Made Flesh** and revealed his divine nature to us in the physical substances we experience on earth. FREE daily devotions available at the Ministry Center.

***Come early on December 11th.** At 11 a.m. watch your school presenting the Christmas gospel to our school families in "Uncertain Poor Shepherds" in the sanctuary.

Christmas Eve | December 24

3 p.m. (contemporary worship)

5 p.m. (blended worship)

7 p.m. (traditional worship)

Christmas Day | 10 a.m.

(traditional worship)



All are invited to watch our young people share the Christmas story in a creative way. Join us on a super-secret spy mission that takes a little expert espionage and a lot of God's unconditional love to change one town member's feelings about Christmas in a musical celebration of the true meaning of Jesus' birth.

Holy Cross, a community that's transformed through genuine **GROWTH** so all may follow him.

Wednesday Night

- 5—5:45 p.m. Meal and salad bar, free will offering
- 6—7 p.m. Classes for all ages

There will be NO Meal and Classes on December 25 and January 1. Classes will resume on January 8th.

<u>Class Title/Level</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
Leaning on Jesus (adult, co-ed)	Room 102	Richelle Hecker
The Chosen (adult, co-ed video study)	Fireside Room	Rick Waters
6th grade affirmation	Room 210	Carl Miedich
7th/8th grade affirmation	Hiller Hall	Pastor Zillinger
High School	Youth Room	David Wickert/Michelle Mueller
Children	Rooms 213 and 225	DCE Lizz
Nursery (under 4)	Nursery	Trained nursery workers

Sunday Morning Classes for all ages 10:30-11:30 a.m.

There will be NO Sunday School and Youth Classes on December 22nd and 29th. Classes will resume on January 5th.

<u>Class Title/Level</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
The Creeds (adult)	Sanctuary	Pastor Zillinger
Lutheranism 101 (adult)	Fireside Room	Vern Gillette
High School	Youth Room	Chris and Heather Abatelli
Middle School	Room 210	Jim Waldron
Preschool/Kindergarten	Room 213	
1st/ 2nd Grade	Room 222	
3rd-5th Grade	Room 225	
Nursery (under 4)	Nursery	Trained nursery workers

Kids and Youth Activity and Medical Release Form

It's that time of the year to fill out the 2024-2025 Activity and Medical Release Form. This form must be filled out once per year and serves as your activity and medical release for all classes and activities at Holy Cross.





Midweek Adult Classes

- **The Study of Mark** (co-ed) meets on Mondays at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom. Led by Wayne & Lisa Gayler.
- **Hebrews** (women's study) meets on Mondays at 1:30 p.m. via Zoom. Led by Gail Neal.
- **Hebrews** (men's study) meets on Thursdays at 6 a.m. at Wade's Café. Led by Neil Ridenour.
- **Max Lucado books** (women's study) meets on Thursdays at 9 a.m. via Zoom. Led by Connie Bond.
- **Bible Study-Acts** (co-ed) meets on Thursdays at 10 a.m. in the Fireside Room.
- **Theology on Tap** (men's study) meets on the fourth Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Trinity Brewing (4630 Forge Rd.) Please call Carl Miedich (618) 780-3139 for more information.



Middle School Christmas Party

All middle schoolers are invited to come Sunday, December 22, 2-4 p.m. in the youth room.

High School Christmas Party

December 20 at 6 p.m.

Join us as we fellowship together for a night of food, fun, and God's love. White elephant, fondue, and Minute to Win It games. Additional Details to come!

A Drummer Boy Christmas: LIVE - for King + Country

December 8 at 6 p.m. at AMC Chapel Hills

ALL YOUTH are invited. Tickets cost \$12.50 and will be pre-purchased, so please email Michelle at michellem@holycrosscs.org, so she can get the right number.

Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World

Upcoming Events

- **December 15 - Mites Sunday** is the third Sunday of each month. All are welcome to drop off donations at the Ministry Center.
Holiday RADA knife sales begin in mid-October. You can also visit the [website](#) to order anytime. Great Christmas gift idea!
- **December 6** - Packaging Day for Cookies for the Military
- **January 18** - Save the Date: Pregnancy Center Baby and Toddler Shower. Starts at 9:30 a.m. in the Fireside Room. If you can't make the shower, you are welcome to drop off donations to the Ministry Center.

Cookies for Military Members

Now through December 6th

The congregation is invited to contribute to this outreach to the military members who have to serve over the holidays. Please bring small, non-sticky treats to room 120. Come help us pack treat trays on December 6th

We'd Love to Have You Join an LWML Circle

- **Sarah Circle** - 2nd Mondays at 10 a.m. in Fireside Room/Zoom. Study: *The Baptismal River: Studying the Sacrament throughout Scripture* by Richard Davenport
- **Joy Circle** - 3rd Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m. in Hiller Hall. Study: From the LWML Quarterly
- **Deborah Circle** - 3rd Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in Fireside Room/Zoom. Study: *God's Relentless Love - A Study of Hosea* by Sharma Fritz
- **Esther Circle** - Wednesday nights at 6 p.m. **ON HIATUS**

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation.
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord
From the house of the Lord we bless you

Zech 9:9; Ps 118:26



the Springs Rescue Mission. The children are learning to think of others and give gratefully.

Thank you again for praying for us daily—to stay healthy—so we can continue sharing the love of Christ.

May you know the exceedingly great joy of Jesus' birth this Christmas!

Mona Book, School Director

Holy Cross Lutheran School

Run to Jesus!

Merry Christmas! Holy Cross preschoolers will present "Uncertain Poor Shepherds" on December 11th at 11 a.m. in the church sanctuary. The children are very excited to present the birth of Jesus, remembering that God used poor shepherds to go and tell. Please join us before the Advent service to see your school presenting the Christmas gospel to our school families.

"When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.' And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger." Luke 2:15-16 (ESV).

Connections and relationships are important, especially this time of year. Holy Cross Lutheran Church members can make connections with unchurched school families that can go a long way in helping the families feel welcome. The school is very much a mission field. With this in mind, Christian Advent calendars, complete with the Christmas story, have been given out to every school family to use. School families have been invited to Advent services, Sunday services, Sunday School, Christmas Programs and special Christmas Services. If you see someone you don't know at worship this holiday season, please help them feel welcome at Holy Cross!

The school collected food for our food pantry during the month of November. During December they will collect hats and mittens, which will be taken to

Are you a senior who loves children?

Join us for



December 10th at 3:30 in the afternoon
Holy Cross Lutheran Preschool

We want to provide an opportunity for intergenerational conversation and craft at a fun and delicious Christmas gathering.

RSVP

Cheryl Dempsey 719-641-5856

Never Alone | December 14, 10 a.m.

Any women looking for Christian fellowship are invited to attend gatherings in the Fireside Room. We will share a devotion followed by fellowship time. Those attending may bring their own food or beverage if desired. If you have any questions please call Lorrie at 719-360-2272.



Holy Cross, a community that's transformed through genuine **SERVICE** so all may follow him.



Community Garden Testimony

Today while at work I came across one of Holy Cross Community Garden's previous gardeners. She is a mom with children who gardened with us for 2 years. Since that time, she has moved into a home from Habitat for Humanity. She told me that after moving in, they put in raised garden beds in the back yard. She has successfully grown lettuce, yellow squash, zucchini, and tomatoes in her new garden. I was so excited to hear her story. She was at the school training today for a new job with D-11. What a success story for the garden! To learn new skills, and to be able to teach them to her children! Please continue to pray for our neighbors around Holy Cross and this outreach program.

-Trish Gillette

Position Open

The Community Garden is **seeking new coordinators** for this ministry as Trish and Vern are stepping down. Please call the office if you are interested in learning about this opportunity.

Stitchin' Servants December 21

This group usually meets on the third Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. in the Fireside Room. They make baptismal blankets, prayer shawls, and other handmade items for local organizations.



Honduras Special Project

The 2025 Holy Cross Honduras mission team is assembled and already in preparations for our trip next March. We have exciting news to share about this year's special project! Pastor Omar has long had a desire to establish a medical clinic in Lepaterique to serve the community. With help from church partners, Betesda church has been able to secure land and is building a first floor which focuses on physical needs.

The next phase is to build a second floor focused on providing mental health trauma and counseling services. Betesda is asking Holy Cross to partner with them to complete this phase. From Pastor Omar: ***"The clinic will aim to receive mothers who have suffered from sexual assaults, children who have suffered physical or psychological abuse, children from the middle school and high school who may be exhibiting aggressive behaviors, and to address multiple forms of discrimination. It will also serve as a support for them and provide counseling."***

Funds raised this year will go toward this project and additionally to support the churches of Santa Redencion and LCMS Good Shepherd in Tegucigalpa.

Honduras Special Project donations can be made through January 19th online through the church donation tile labeled "Honduras Special Projects" or by check to Holy Cross with the same designation in the note. I am so thankful to God for all of our Holy Cross members and their amazing support of Honduras missions!

Food Pantry

NEW HOURS: Open Mondays & Tuesdays 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m.

December needs: condiments and baking supplies. Monetary donations are always appreciated also.

Have you ever wondered how much work goes into our pantry each month? In October there was **263 hours served** by our wonderful volunteers. The coordinator put in **30+ hours**. The pantry served **354 families** in October. Thank you congregation for your continued tithes and food donations.

If you would like to help in the food pantry, contact Kelly Carter at foodpantryhc@gmail.com or Gail Youngmeyer at gailyoungmeyer@yahoo.com. There are direct service positions as well as behind-the-scenes role.



Book Bank

We are always accepting **donations of good quality books (in English or Spanish), appropriate for children ages 3 to 9**. Books may be dropped off at the front office during the week or at the **Ministry Center on Sunday mornings after worship**. If you wish to make a targeted monetary contribution for this effort we would be quite grateful. Thank you for your support! For more information, contact Dan Szarke at szarke@yahoo.com.

Thanksgiving Basket Giveaway

Our annual Thanksgiving basket giveaway was a great success thanks to some great volunteers and all of you who donated money to purchase the groceries and socks for the giveaway.

225 baskets

210 turkeys

958 pairs of socks

Thank You!!

As modeled by Jesus,
we will build a **WELCOMING** community.

Young Adults

Holy Cross would love to get a group started just for you! There are even funds set aside to help get you started. If you are interested in being part of this group please let Christine know.

Scrapbooking Group | Dec 21

Bring your scrapbooking or other projects to work on while we fellowship and create. We *usually* meet the third Saturday of the month at 10 a.m. in Fireside Room. Contact Janet Grangruth with any questions: 719-638-6874 or janetgrangruth@msn.com.



Save the Date for Bingo on 12/14 at 5 p.m.

The Church Office and School will be closed December 25-January 2.

Holy Cross Armed Forces Ministry

Upcoming Events:

- **Military Women's Coffee Group** – Join other Military Moms/Women/Spouses for a fun casual coffee group on the first Tuesday of each month. This month's coffee is on **December 3** at 9:30 a.m. in Hiller Hall. Come join the fun and fellowship. Childcare is provided and children are always welcome.
- **Armed Forces Activities** – We wish to once again thank the congregation for helping make the Veterans Day potluck so successful! Thank you. A special thank you for those who helped us with the set-up, in the kitchen and clean-up
- **Wreaths Across America** – This year's event is scheduled for **December 14th at the Pikes Peak National Cemetery**. The ceremony begins at 9 a.m. with wreath laying immediately after. Mark your calendars now and plan on attending this moving event.



Roster Updates:

Email us at holycrossafmc@gmail.com if your address, email, or phone number has recently changed, or if you would like to be added/removed from the roster.

Who We Serve:

We are dedicated to those who have served or are currently on active duty and their family members (including Gold Star families). We invite you to experience fellowship, outreach, Bible study, and support services.

Where to Find Us:

Find us on Facebook at [Holy Cross Armed Forces Ministry](#). Be sure to also check out the Armed Forces Ministry bulletin board located outside room 102 for information, highlighted events, and the quarterly spotlighted person or family.

Young Adult Game Night Immanuel December 13 (date change this month)

Young adults (ages 18-39) are welcome to join us in the fellowship hall at 6:30 p.m. the first Friday of each month for a game night. Feel free to bring your favorite game and a snack to share! Text or call Becky Fisher at (254) 747-0016.

Young At Heart | Dec 2 | 11:30 am

- **December 2** - Holy Cross Lutheran Church. Lunch by "Lil' Howards." Program by Gus Meza.
- **January 6** - Business meeting (election of officers, presentation of 2025 agenda) at Holy Cross Lutheran Church.

For more information regarding Young at Heart please call, text or leave a message on Larry Schumm's phone, 567-259-9559.



Mission Marketplace Thank You

Thank you for making this year's Marketplace a success with your generous donations and for supporting and shopping at the event. Special thanks to **Paravacinis** and **Kangaroo Coffee** for food and drink donations. Extra thanks also to those who donated to our silent auction and our general fund table. Special thanks also to **Santa and Mrs. Claus (Scott and Margie Keller)** for being a delight for young and old.