



The *HOLY CROSS WORD*

Words of news, information, humor and inspiration from Holy Cross

DECEMBER 2014

"Share the Hope"

VOL. LVIII, NO. 4

FROM OUR VACANCY PASTOR

This busy season is the best time to take the time to consider the magnitude of Jesus' birth

St. Paul wrote to the Galatians, *"In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son."* Luke, in his Gospel, makes careful note of the time of Christ's birth: *"And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria."* And Matthew, in his Gospel account of Christ's birth, begins with a time reference: *"Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king..."*

God, the Creator of time and Lord over time, entered into time and became subject to it when He was conceived and born into this world. Why? To redeem, to make new and holy, not simply time, but your time. In our ever-busy and hectic holiday season, keep this in mind and take time to consider, and give thanks for, God's redemption of your times and days in Christ!

I recently found time to read a portion of a sermon from St. Augustine, the 5th-century bishop of Hippo, a city in north Africa. May your time be blessed as you consider what he says!

"With the fullness of time He appeared—the One who wanted to set us free from time. For, set free from time, we would be able to reach that eternity which is beyond time. We would therefore no longer need to say: When will the hour come? For it would be an eternal day. No yesterday would precede it and no tomorrow would follow it. In this world, however, days go by and others come. No day remains. Even as we speak, the moments pass, the first syllable pressed on by the second that is waiting impatiently to be heard. As soon as we have spoken, we have become a little older. I am certainly older now than I was this morning. Nothing stands still. Nothing remains firm in time. We must therefore love the One through whom the times came to be, so that we may be set free from time and become established in eternity, where time and the changes it brings no longer exist.

It is, then, a great mercy on the part of our Lord Jesus Christ that He, through whom the times came to be, came to be for our sakes in time, that He, through whom all things came to be, came to be in the midst of all things, that He became what He had made. For He became what He had made. He, who had made the human race, became human, so that what He had made would not be lost."

Thanks be to God through Him who has given us eternal joy and so made our times new, our Lord Jesus Christ, now and through all time!

In Christ our Lord,

---PASTOR ROBERT BEINKE

St. Peter Lutheran, Norwalk
and Vacancy Pastor, Holy Cross





Sunday, November 30 – The Season of Advent begins

Tuesday, December 2

5:00 p.m. – Holy Cross serves Community Supper at St. John's Episcopal-Bridgeport

Wednesdays, December 3, 10, 17

6:15 p.m. – Advent Soup Suppers

7:30 p.m. – Advent Midweek Worship Services – *Holden Evening Prayer*

Thursday, December 11

7:00 p.m. – Board of Directors' meeting

Sunday, December 14

11:45 a.m. – Family Fun for all ages after the services!
Decorating the Sanctuary for Christmas *AND*
Gingerbread House making activity (*right after the late service*)

Tuesday, December 23

9:15 a.m. – Preschool Christmas Program

Wednesday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

6:00 p.m. – Family Service with Sunday School Christmas Program

11:00 p.m. – Candlelight Eucharist

Thursday, December 25 – The Nativity of Our Lord

10:30 a.m. – Christmas Day Festival Eucharist

Thursday, January 1 – New Year's Day...Happy New Year!

Sunday, January 25

11:45 a.m. – Holy Cross Lutheran Annual Meeting

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

5995 Main Street, Trumbull, CT 06611

Office Phone: 203-268-4555; **Pastor's Study Phone:** 203-268-7555

Church Office E-mail: holycrss@mindspring.com **FAX:** 203-268-5499

Website: www.holycrosstrumbull.org

Christian Preschool Phone: 203-268-6471 **E-mail:** mglennonhccp@mindspring.com

Worship Services – Sunday: 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.; Monday: 7:00 p.m.

VACANCY PASTOR: Rev. Robert Beinke (*from St. Peter Lutheran-Norwalk*)
203-847-1252, stpeterlcpastor@yahoo.com

MUSIC DIRECTOR: Michael J. Gilbertson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' PRESIDENT: Kerry Geffert

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' VICE-PRESIDENT: Michele Van Wart

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' SECRETARY: Jeannie Mones

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' TREASURER: Greg Dowling

NEWSLETTER MANAGING EDITOR: Cliff Schrock

NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION: Mary Schrock



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Holy Cross congregation is to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord (Matthew 28:18-20). We will share the love and forgiveness of Our Lord Jesus Christ with one another, our community and the whole world so that we can take part in the joyous privilege of "making disciples of all nations" through the power of the preaching and teaching the Word of God, administering His Sacraments, and joining together in service fellowship according to the confessional standard of the Lutheran Church (Article III).



**Like
Holy Cross
on Facebook!**



A PRAYER FOR ADVENT
Two sentences, spoken daily,
can serve as a great prayer
during this busy month

"I'm still pretty patient and calm,
Lord, yet my anticipation tickles
around the edges of this busy
time. Keep my heart focused on
You as Christmas draws closer."

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NEWSLETTER NOTES

Our next deadline is...

The next issue of The Holy Cross Word is the January edition. The deadline for all articles is Friday, December 12.

Due to the work load in the church office

during the month of December, please be prompt with your submittals. Please turn in your article(s) to the newsletter mailbox, located outside the church office, or send them via e-mail to:

holycrss@mindspring.com.



Unless you have a lengthy article, we encourage you to use the "Information Form," located in a box on the narthex table. You may use this form to submit details for upcoming events, the "We Are Family" and "Thank You" columns, and other short items. After filling it out (please sign your name), put it in the newsletter mailbox.

SEASON OF HOPE SEASON OF JOY!

Our Advent Preparation—

- ◆ Wednesdays, Dec. 3, 10 & 17
Soup Suppers in our Fellowship Hall at 6:15 p.m.
Holden Evening Prayer at 7:30 p.m.
Our theme is “Getting Ready for Christmas:
Shopping, Decorating and Baking”

Our Christmas Celebration—

- ◆ Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 6 p.m.:
“Family Service” – participation by our Sunday School
- ◆ Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 11 p.m.:
“Service of Light” – Candlelight Eucharist
- ◆ Thursday, Dec. 25, at 10:30 a.m.:
“The Nativity of Our Lord” – Festival Eucharist



BUT THE ANGEL SAID TO THEM,
“DO NOT BE AFRAID.
I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS
THAT WILL CAUSE GREAT JOY
FOR ALL THE PEOPLE.”

LUKE 2:10, NIV

2014 CALL COMMITTEE

Process continues to move along with review of candidates

We have received the list of pastoral candidates and their profile packages from the District Office, and are reviewing the material now. From Nov. 12 through Nov. 26, we evaluated in several phases the candidates based on the profiles compared to our congregation’s survey summary to develop the top candidates. Interviews will also need to take place. The final list of candidates will be presented to the congregation; and a special voters’ meeting to decide on the congregation’s preference could take place as early as mid-December. If we do not have our final list by early December, we will look to have the voters’ meeting in early January. Our committee has a lot of work to do in a short period of time. We are confident in our path forward for Holy Cross as we are guided by the Holy Spirit. Please continue to pray for this good work taking place right now. As always, if you have any questions, please contact me at 203-924-2109 or mvichiola@sbcglobal.net.

In Christ's service,

---MICHELE A. VICHIOLO-VAN WART
2014 Call Committee Chair



DECK THE HALLS

Join us on Dec. 14 for decorating – both the church and gingerbread houses!

Let’s make our church glisten for the coming of our Lord! Or maybe you want to have some “glistening” in your own home and decorate a gingerbread house.

On December 14, right after the late service, we will have a pizza lunch, along with decorating the sanctuary and/or making some yummy gingerbread houses. Please sign up for either activity so that we know how much pizza to order and how many house kits to buy. The sign-up sheet is on the narthex table. Again this year, gingerbread house kits are \$15 for one house and \$10 for an additional house (in your family). Hope to see you for this fun fellowship event on the 14th!

---LYDIA STRUZIK and DONNA BOGEN

Worship and Discipleship Directors



PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL

Don't succumb to 'vacancy fatigue' by being absent

Want to know what our members are talking about on Sunday mornings? Oh sure, there's talk about the call, but what about the sustained discussions? What is the burning topic? Well, it is "where is everyone?" Doesn't matter whether it's the early or late service members, and it's even the Sunday School teachers. People are asking, "Where is everyone?"

Here's my hunch – it's "vacancy fatigue." I get it, and this is by no means meant to slight the guest pastors who have given so willingly of their time to lead our worship services. A few months ago I wrote about the challenge of change. We had grown accustomed to a certain way in which services were conducted. And I believe that still to be true. As the busy holidays approach and we begin to hunker down for the winter, I can't help but imagining many of our members waking up on Sunday morning and thinking, "it won't matter if I miss this Sunday. After all, he's not our regular pastor. It's just not the same." Then it happens the following Sunday, and the next, and the pattern has been developed. The "fatigue" has set in.



*And lo,
I am with you
ALWAYS...*
--Matthew 28:20

Please, fight the fatigue. Your fellow members need you. As Lutherans, that's not always easy for us to admit, but that does not make it any less true. Your presence is missed! Your children are missed! As we move into

Advent, we begin our new tradition of the *Holden Evening Prayer* service for our midweek services. It's a beautiful service for young and old alike; one that has drawn members back each week. Join us! Make worship attendance a family priority!

Watch for a mailing regarding a special congregational meeting to vote on issuing a pastoral call. It may occur this month. Prayerfully consider the candidates, then attend the meeting to vote. Take responsibility for the future of your congregation.

---KERRY GEFFERT
Holy Cross President



Please take special note...

WINTER-WEATHER NOTICE

The winter season is here, and we remind you that occasionally worship services are canceled due to snowy and/or icy conditions.

WE INTEND TO **ALWAYS** HAVE A 10:30 a.m. SUNDAY SERVICE.

Before you venture out, look/listen for a possible cancellation via:

- If you signed up for the "e-mail blast" system, check your e-mail;
- If you are on Facebook, look for a posting;
- WICC radio (AM 600);
- www.wicc600.com (under "Public Organizations"); or
- WTNH-TV or WSFB-TV.



This month at Holy Cross...

Soup Suppers and Mid-Week Advent Services

Enjoy some great soup in the Fellowship Hall, and close out the evening in the Sanctuary, meditating on God's Word.



**Wednesdays,
Dec. 3
Dec. 10
Dec. 17**

Suppers at 6:15 p.m.

**Holden Evening Prayer
at 7:30 p.m.**

Our theme this year is
"Getting Ready for
Christmas: Shopping,
Decorating and Baking"



How can YOU help?
Please take a turn at
providing a pot of soup
or finger desserts.
Look for the sign-up sheet
on the narthex table.

WORSHIP COMMISSION

Plenty of worship opportunities to prepare for and experience Christ's birth

Christmas is coming! Get ready...be prepared...make sure all the shopping is done, all the food is planned, and all the parties are on your calendar.

But don't forget to add the most important dates to your calendar! Baby Jesus is coming, God's promise is coming to fruition.

We start the month off with our Advent services at 7:30 p.m., on Wednesdays, December 3, 10, and 17. Again this year we will be using the Holden Evening Prayer service, sung by Kerry Geffert and led by Pastor Beinke, our vacancy pastor. Next on the calendar is the Family Christmas Service at 6 p.m., on December 24. Come hear the children's sweet voices as they explain the Christmas story with a little bit of a *twist*. If you can't make it to our Family Service, then why not come to our Candlelight Service at 11 p.m., on December 24? Our choir members have been gearing up their voices to praise our Lord. And above all, Baby Jesus is born...Praise the Lord! Our Christmas Day Service starts at 10:30 a.m. Hope to see you soon.

---LYDIA STRUZIK

Worship Commission Director



COMMUNITY SUPPER

Serve the Lord by serving the needy a welcome meal

Our pleas were heard! Thirteen volunteers showed up to serve the 95 Community Supper recipients on November 4. It helped that there was no school that day. Grace Lutheran-Stratford members Maria Nocarro and Helen and Jon Harper accomplished the cooking tasks in record time. By late afternoon, while Anna Mae Berger poured juice, a crew comprised of Val and Rich Huydic, Mary Schrock, Joey and Laurie Vaitkus, and Grace members Diane Hintz Schyhor and Hank Saunders, cut the four hams. At serving time, Jim Leslie and Kendra Norman and Grace members Brendon, Saviden and Gustave Semon joined them. Mary, Kendra and Laurie traded the dish-washing tasks during that time. A hearty THANK YOU to the volunteers. We're looking forward to your good help on December 2.



Preparing and serving the meal on the first Tuesday of the month at St. John's Episcopal is a mission that falls under Holy Cross' Social Ministry Commission. Our next community supper is on Tuesday, December 2. If you can volunteer your time, please put your name on the sheet found on the narthex table.

---DAVID and MARY ANN SCHILLER

COVENANT TO CARE FOR CHILDREN

Christmas gifts due, unwrapped, by Dec. 10, to benefit children in need

On November 23 we presented the annual "Giving Tree" to the congregation. This tree poster was filled with ornament tags, one for each child in the caseload of our "adopted" DCF social worker, Mimose Ulysses-Laurenard. Mimose currently has 25 children in her caseload between the ages of 4 and 18. If you took one of these tags, agreeing to buy the suggested gift, please remember that the gifts are due at the church, unwrapped, by Wednesday, Dec. 10. Thank you in advance for your Christmas spirit of generosity and love for these children in need.



---CINDY CICCIA, clc717@gmail.com

---MARY SCHROCK, schrocknroll@optonline.net

Covenant to Care Liaisons

Take Note

DURING OUR PASTORAL VACANCY anyone in need of spiritual care may contact Rev. Robert Beinke, our Vacancy Pastor, at St. Peter Lutheran Church in Norwalk, 203-847-1252, stpeterlcpastor@yahoo.com. You may also phone Kerry Geffert, Board President, 203-925-8341; Pat Deloge, Head Shepherd, 203-261-9434; or the Church Office, 203-268-7555 (*office hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.*).

OUR FLOCK

Christian caring and praying at Holy Cross

This is the Shepherds' Commission's "FYI" column letting our members know for whom we have prayed during our recent worship services. Please continue to remember these people in your prayers.

We remember our members: **Doris Bernt**, recovering from knee-replacement surgery; **JoAnne Meyer**; **Anita Schoch**, recovering from heart-valve replacement surgery; **Bob Solaz**; and for our homebound members – **Emma Fengler**; **George Morris** and **Harvey Pomerenk**.

We prayed for our family and friends; **Gail Agria**, recovering from cancer surgery; **Amy Alfano**, daughter of a friend of Audrey Paray, who has Stage 3 ovarian cancer; **Hayley Annino**, friend of Kathryn Struzik, at home following a stem-cell transplant; **Gada Awada**, co-worker of Pat Deloge, going through chemo for Stage 2 breast cancer; **Penny Dalrymple**, friend of Paul Hagberg, for healing; **Linda Desabella**, friend of Patty Peterson, battling cancer; **Joseph Dombrowski**, Michele Van Wart's uncle, for continued improvement as he undergoes treatment for multiple blood clots; **Susanne Dowling**, Greg's mom, for a speedy and healing recovery of an infection in her shoulder; **Marti Fischer**, cousin of Carol Burns, who is blind and paralyzed; **Kathy Gardner**, Jim Leslie's sister recovering from cancer surgery; **Kay Geffert**, Kerry's mother, suffering from essential tremors; **Janet Gibson**, Mary Schrock's sister, diagnosed with breast cancer and having surgery; **Abby Haggerty**, 9-year-old student at Christian Heritage school, recovering from successful brain surgery; **Cindy Keegan**, a teacher at Christian Heritage School, diagnosed with pancreatic cancer; **Betty Kessler**; **Mary Koch**, niece of Ron Froehlich; and **Ramona Kondracki**, wife of a co-worker of Jim Leslie, who has begun chemotherapy for cancer in her sinus cavity.



We also prayed for **Ed Lavin**, friend and neighbor of the Van Wart and Jim Atkinson families; **Emmy Lightfoot**, relative of the Dowlings, diagnosed with epilepsy; **Eleanor Lynn**, friend of Effie Solaz, experiencing paralysis following a stroke; **Jean Matthews**, Chris Matthews' mother-in-law, following open-heart surgery; **Edgar Meyer**, Don's brother, who has pancreatic cancer and is undergoing chemotherapy; **Joan Meyer**, friend of the Dietmans, in rehab following knee-replacement surgery; **Kylie Middlemass**, Anita Beer's granddaughter, responding well to various therapies as she works through the difficulties of autism; **Gertrude Moran**, friend of Anita Schoch, going through treatments for lymphoma; **Chris O'Brien**, friend of Marry and Otto Atkinson, paralyzed as a result of an accident; **Luis Rivera**, friend of Doris Bernt, who had a lung transplant; **Dagmar Rosenberg**, Ingrid Leibold's sister, recovering from surgery to remove a tumor from her pancreas; **Nancy Saad**, friend of the DiLallas' who has completed chemo and radiation for breast cancer; **Lois Sanders**, daughter of Ron Froehlich, recovering from breast surgery; **Joey Senft**, cousin of the Senft family, with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease); **Lorraine Tamas**, neighbor of the Leslie's, who suffered a stroke; **Mike Tavares**, friend of the Deloge's, battling side effects of Valley fever; **Andy Turnbull**, Scott's brother, in remission from leukemia; **David Van Wart**, Kimberly Atkinson's dad and Rick Van Wart's brother, in rehab following a fall; **Craig Wilson**, son of friends of the Deloge's, recovering from tongue cancer surgery; and the anonymous people including Dawn.

Other prayers were for protection for all those serving in the military, including **Michael Collins, USMC**; and prayers of comfort for the family and friends of former New England District President, **Rev. James Keurulainen**, who was called home to the Lord.

If your friend or family member is on this list, be sure to keep us updated on his or her progress. During our pastoral vacancy, when you have prayer requests or updates to those on this prayer list, deliver them to the church office and the Shepherds' Commission will include the requests in this monthly report.

NOTE: If you would like to be included in our e-mail Prayer Circle, please provide your name and e-mail address to the church office.

---PAT DELOGE
Shepherds' Commission

WORDS FOR THE ADVENT SEASON

By Frederick Buechner, American writer and theologian, from his book *Listening to Your Life*

Advent means "coming," of course, and the promise of Advent is that what is coming is an unimaginable invasion. The mythology of our age has to do with flying saucers and invasions from outer space, and that is unimaginable enough. But what is upon us now is even more so – a close encounter not of the third kind but of a different kind altogether. An invasion of holiness. That's what Advent is all about.

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THANKS A BUNCH!

This column recognizes the gifts of time and talent our church members provide to do God's work in our church and community. If you have an item to include in this monthly "thank you" column, please jot it down and put it in the "newsletter" mailbox.

To **Cindy Ciccia** for all the work she put into coordinating this year's Breakfast & Artist's event on October 18.

To **Edith Skoog** for her weekly commitment to picking up and arranging the flowers for the two altar vases.

To the Holy Cross members who helped with either shopping, cooking or serving at the November 4 Community Supper at St. John's Episcopal-Bridgeport: **Anna Mae Berger, Val and Rich Huydic, Jim Leslie, Kendra Norman, David and Mary Ann Schiller, Mary Schrock, and Joey and Laurie Vaitkus.**

To **Linda Suhr** for continuing to serve as the volunteer in the church office.

To **Jim Atkinson, Paul Hagberg** and **Cliff Schrock** for serving as the lay leaders of our Monday Evening Worship service over the past month.

THANK YOU!
THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!



PRAYER CIRCLE

In need of prayer? Make one of the following contacts to begin the e-mail prayer circle

Our Prayer Circle offers an opportunity to unite in prayer with our Holy Cross family beyond our regular worship services. To request a prayer you may make one of the following contacts:

- Between the hours of 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. weekdays, e-mail or phone the church office: holycrss@mindspring.com or 203-268-4555. Requests received after 2 p.m. (Monday-Friday) will be circulated on the next business day.
- When the office is closed, contact Don Meyer by e-mail or phone, delsmeyer@sbcglobal.net or 203-268-2080.

---SHEPHERDS' COMMISSION

CHURCH CHUCKLES



THE WRITER WITHIN

Life makes you feel weary and on shaky ground, but peace can be found if you let it come to you

Are you feeling weary? Worn down? Does it seem like everything around you is contributing to a weight on your shoulders?

If you are feeling like you can't get around the corner on the Road to Calmer Times, I'm right there with you.

I have this nutty dream that if the world just came to a stop for a couple months, and nothing else was added to the piles of stuff I have to get through, I'll catch up and then be able to stay with the world once it started up again.

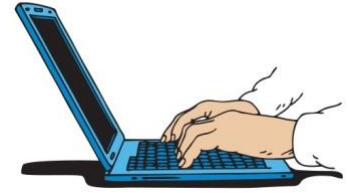
"Writer Within," continues on Page 8

"Writer Within," continued from Page 7

But at the moment I can't get over the hump of feeling like I don't have full control of the daily flow of life. And then when I look outside my own world and see what's going on around me, well, so much seems to be in complete disarray. Politicians can't compromise and find common ground to move us forward. Terrorists only desire to hurt and maim and kill. The economy is a constant concern about how stable it will become; the gap between the rich and poor widens every year. Job stability, especially for someone like me in middle age, weighs more and more on the mind. Our own church is not in a calm place right now with a pastoral vacancy and members who are missing more frequently. Then there is our home and family life and the concerns we always have that our children our well and family safe and sound. And heck, why is this cold air here already as I write this before Thanksgiving?!

Some would say, Cliff, this is life and it has always been a crapshoot, get used to it.

Well, I understand that, but it doesn't mean I have to like it or that I can't do something to help me endure it better. And now, as we enter December, the world is telling me I've got to go out and buy presents! Are you crazy?! I can't possibly go into the world of crazed shoppers and come out of it unscathed.



But, enter it I will. And keeping it all together in this tough world we live in will be achieved because of one main, glorious, beautiful and peaceful reason: A Baby is on the way, a Child who will grow up to make all our pains and ills and sorrows go away. I will do my best to show the giving spirit the Baby Jesus instills in us through my gifts to others, but I also try to give myself a great present too: Calm moments during Christmas to remind myself that all the stress life gives us can be endured and can be lessened when we let the love of God, given in the form of His Son Jesus, just rest in our hearts.

Take in the meaning of the Christmas season, and let it make all the cares of the world seem secondary to what Christ's birth means to the world. It won't make our responsibilities and the world's troubles go away, but you will know where they stand in the big picture.

---CLIFF SCHROCK

Holy Cross Word Staff



*Wishing you a meaningful Advent Season
and a Blessed Christmas celebration!*



CELEBRATING DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



DEC. 2:	RILEY RICCIO	DEC. 12:	COLE DOWLING
DEC. 3:	AUDREY PARAY		JORDAN MATTHEWS
DEC. 5:	CHRISTY HALLS	DEC. 13:	SARAH BOGEN
DEC. 6:	STEPHEN DOMANICK	DEC. 20:	KATE DUNAY
DEC. 7:	JIM FINCH	DEC. 23:	ETHAN ANDERSON
	BRYAN LISCINSKY		MARK POLLEX
DEC. 8:	PATSY CERONE, JR.	DEC. 26:	JOHN SELK
	ROBERTA CROCKER	DEC. 27:	BILLY DOMANICK
	EMMA FENGLER		SARAH POLLEX
DEC. 10:	JOANNE BOGEN		MANFRED SCHLAICH
		DEC. 31:	EFFIE SOLAZ