



The HOLY CROSS WORD

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

APRIL 2014

"Share the Hope"

VOL. LVII, NO. 8

MIDWEEK AND HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SERVICES



April 2 and 9

Midweek Lenten Service:
Holden Evening Prayer
at 7:30 p.m.

6:15 p.m. *Soup Supper*



April 13: Palm Sunday

Worship at 8 and 10:30 a.m.



April 17: Maundy Thursday

7:30 p.m. - Service
with Holy Communion
and Stripping of the Altar



April 18: Good Friday

Noon - Midday Service
7:30 p.m. - Tenebrae Service



April 20: Easter Sunday

Celebrate the Resurrection
of our Lord!

7:00 a.m.* - Easter Vigil
10:30 a.m. - Festival Eucharist

8:30 a.m. *Easter Breakfast*

* Please note early time

FROM P.E.W. TO PEW

The tenet of Law and Gospel to be topic of new class

How do we rightly understand and practice the Christian Faith? If we are to call ourselves "Christians," and have it mean more than just a box we check off when asked our religious preference, what is essential for us to know and do? Wouldn't it seem necessary to have a knowledge and understanding of the basics, in order that we might know what to believe and how to behave? Lutherans have always claimed that if we are to rightly understand God's will for our lives, what He expects of us, what He demands of us, and what He has in love done for us, then we need to get a handle on God's **Law** and on God's **Gospel**.

In his book *Catechetical Helps*, Erwin Kurth suggested the Morse code distress signal, SOS, as a simple teaching aid in understanding, and distinguishing between, Law and Gospel. He wrote that the Law of God "Shows Our Sin" and that the Gospel "Shows Our Savior." It is a simplistic approach, but not one without merit. For our relationship with God, both the Law and the Gospel are necessary. How to apply them to that relationship is where an added measure of "finesse" is required. But it is not an easy task to master.

So difficult is it that Martin Luther wrote,

Hence, whoever knows well this art of distinguishing between Law and Gospel, him place at the head and call him doctor of Holy Scripture.

C.F.W. Walther, the first president of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, wrote:

The true knowledge of the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is not only a glorious light, affording the correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures, but without this knowledge Scripture is and remains a sealed book.

What role does the Law have in the life of the Christian? If there is a role, what exactly is it? How does the Gospel affect our life? Does it? These are important questions for the Christian who takes seriously his/her relationship with God. With these thoughts, then, I invite you to delve into these matters with fellow believers on Sunday mornings, beginning April 6. We are embarking on a six-week class entitled "Law and Gospel." It will be about the basics of the Christian Faith - fundamental stuff, foundational stuff, important stuff. Seriously consider joining us. And I'll...

See You in Worship, as well,

Pastor Emil Witschy

FROM
P.E.W.
TO
PEW



Tuesday, April 1

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

Wednesdays, April 2 and 9

6:15 p.m. – Lenten Soup Suppers
7:30 p.m. – Lenten Midweek Service with the theme, "Restored in Christ"

Thursday, April 10

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

Sunday, April 13 – Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday

Thursday, April 17 – Maundy Thursday

7:30 p.m. – Worship service with Holy Communion and Stripping of the Altar

Friday, April 18 – Good Friday

Noon – Midday Service
7:30 p.m. – Tenebrae Service

Sunday, April 20 – The Resurrection of Our Lord: EASTER

7:00 a.m. – Easter Vigil
8:15/8:30 a.m. – Easter Breakfast (*immediately following the early service*)
10:30 a.m. – Easter Festival Eucharist

Tuesday, April 22

6:30 p.m. – Confirmation Dinner

Sunday, April 27

Rite of Confirmation at the 10:30 a.m. Service

Sunday, May 4

1:30 p.m. – Greater Bridgeport CROP Walk

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

5995 Main Street, Trumbull, CT 06611

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

Pastor's E-mail: pewhclc@mindspring.com

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

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

Parsonage: 6025 Main Street, Trumbull, CT 06611 Phone: 203-268-1722

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

PASTOR: Emil A. Witschy

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 EDITOR: Pastor Emil A. Witschy

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 us on Facebook!

*Are you on Facebook? Did you know **your** church, Holy Cross Lutheran, has a Facebook page? After you "Like" us, you'll see postings of upcoming events, pictures from events, and other notifications.*



THE HOPE OF EASTER

Words by Bible Scholar, N.T. Wright, from the book, *Surprised by Hope*

"Easter was when Hope in person surprised the whole world by coming forward from the future into the present."

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NEWSLETTER NOTES

Our next deadline is...

The next issue of The Holy Cross Word is the May edition. The deadline for all articles is

Tuesday, April 15.

You can submit articles for

inclusion in 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.

PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL

Like Abram, our journey this year requires us to be active

If you were in church on March 16, you heard Pastor preach on Genesis 12:1-9, the story of Abram and his journey to the land of Canaan. As I listened, I couldn't help but feel a parallel between Abram's journey and the journey we at Holy Cross are undertaking this year. Like Abram we do not know exactly where our journey will take us; however, through the grace of God we have a promise that everything will work out for good for those that believe.

"For those that believe." Abram believed, giving him the courage to set out. So too, we as a congregation will set out to discern God's plan for our spiritual leadership following Pastor's retirement. In last month's newsletter I introduced the general timeline. I do want to emphasize that we will not begin the nomination phase until after Pastor's retirement. We do this out of deference to, and respect for, Pastor Witschy and acknowledgement of best practices of the call process. In the interim we will have a Vacancy Pastor; this is standard practice.

But I digress. "For those that believe." Four very important words. Our faith trumps concerns over the future of our congregation. It eases financial worries. It frees us to allow the call process to move forward. It gives us hope. Our belief, however, does not give permission to sit idly by. Quite to the contrary, faith calls for action.

Abram did not wait for Canaan to come to him. He set off on a journey. He acted. He built altars along the way. The message for us? Get off your duff! Make sure your family is in a pew for worship services. Fulfill your share of financial stewardship for the well-being of our congregation. Bring your children to Sunday School; demonstrate that faith-in-action is a priority in your life. By your participation show our next spiritual leader that we are a vibrant community that does not live by the 20/80 rule (20 percent of the membership do 80 percent of the work).

Centuries later, Abram's life has much to teach us this year. Faith. Respect. Love. Comfort. Action. Abram got off his duff. What will you do?

---KERRY GEFFERT
Holy Cross President



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

DISCIPLESHIP COMMISSION

Coffee House event was a real crowd pleaser; attend Lent, Easter events

Once again the Discipleship and Worship Commissions teamed up for an event, this time to host a "Coffee House" evening in the Fellowship Hall on March 1. What a way to start the month! It was well attended, with more than 50 people gathered to listen to the melodious voices of Kerry Geffert, Bill Weigle, Mary Schrock, Kim Atkinson, Kathy Boivie and her sister Mary, and Meredith Lobb (a family friend of the Atkinson family). And dazzling us on the piano and leading us in song was Mary Ann Schiller. A big THANK YOU to Bill Weigle who brought and set up all his music equipment – it made the evening sound amazing! Thank you to Laurie Vaitkus, Lydia Struzik, Audrey Paray, Kerry Geffert and Cliff and Mary Schrock for helping set up for the event. And thank you to everyone who brought the delicious treats.



We are in full swing with our soup suppers and Lenten services on Wednesday evenings. At our first soup supper on March 12, we had standing room only. Please come join us for soup, homemade bread and fellowship on the first two Wednesdays in April, the 2nd and 9th, beginning at 6:15 p.m. The Holden Evening Prayer Service begins at 7:30.



The Annual Easter Breakfast will be held on Sunday, April 20, after the 7 a.m. service, beginning at approximately 8:15-8:30. So that we make adequate preparations, if you plan to attend, please sign up on the Easter Breakfast sheet on the narthex table. This sign-up sheet also has a place to indicate what you will bring to share – breakfast casserole, muffins, bagels, pastries, or fruit salad.

Save the date! May 18th will be our annual family bowling afternoon. Look for flyers and more information to come.

Faithfully yours,
---DONNA BOGEN

WORSHIP SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

“Serve the Lord with gladness.” Reader, deacon lists to be updated

Thank you to all our brothers and sisters of Holy Cross that serve as deacons and readers during our worship services. I would especially like to acknowledge Amy Witschy for giving of her time all these years to schedule our deacon and reader volunteers. Since Pastor’s retirement announcement, I have humbly accepted taking on the scheduling duties and I am in the process of updating those lists. In doing so, I need your help and ask that all current deacons and readers contact me during the month of **APRIL**. Please leave a note in my mailbox or speak with me if you plan to continue (or not) serving as a deacon, reader or both and indicate your preference of worship service. To any member who might be interested in serving as a deacon and/or reader please speak to Pastor so that I can add you to the service schedule.



Serve the Lord with Gladness

---DIANE DIETMAN



*Holy Cross Lutheran Church congratulates
Roger Burke, our custodian,
for 10 years of service, and extends
a special “thank you” for his dedication
and care for our church building.*

CROP WALK

Fight hunger one step at a time at annual walk on May 4

What’s for dinner tonight? We may not know, but we do know there will be something to eat. Many people, both near and far, do not have food to eat. Why not help by participating in this year’s 40th Annual CROP Hunger Walk on Sunday, May 4, at 1:30 p.m. The walk begins and ends at the United Congregational Church – corner of State Street and Park Avenue, Bridgeport. If you are unable to walk, please support the walkers. The sign-up process will take place in April.

---CAROL BURNS



You are invited to the **E A S T E R BREAKFAST**

**Sunday, April 20
at 8:30 a.m.
in the
Froehlich
Fellowship Hall**

Please join your Holy Cross family and friends for this annual fellowship tradition.

Worship with us at the 7:00 service and stay for breakfast

or

Come for breakfast at 8:30 and worship with us at the 10:30 service

***If you plan to attend,
please sign up
in the narthex.***

Breakfast casseroles, muffins, bagels, pastries and fruit salad are needed. If you can provide any of these items, please indicate this on the sign-up sheet.

INQUIRING MINDS

We inquire, you respond; we'd love your input

We had hoped that the "in" box would be overflowing with responses to last month's question, "What is your favorite flower?" This is one instance that the newsletter staff doesn't mind having extra work to do. We thought the question would entice our readers since thinking about flowers blooming means that spring *truly is* right around the corner, right? The continued colder temps must have forced our newsletter readers to shy away from formulating an answer. But we thank the nine people who shared their responses. The answers are listed in the order by which they were received.

Nicole Benson: "My favorite flowers are *tulips*, because they remind me of springtime, and *roses*, because my middle name is Rose!"

Amy Witschy: "*Carnation*...definitely white carnations!"

Billie Skoog: "My favorite flower is the *rhododendron*. We have a rhododendron bush in our yard and when it is in full bloom it is just one blaze of color. The flower is so intricate with all its many mini flowers."

Edith Skoog: "That's a hard one. There are so many beautiful flowers in God's creation, but I think my favorite is the *orchid*. I have five orchid plants in my dining-room window and they all bloom at the same time, twice a year, usually in late winter and again in the fall. Each flower is so delicate and lasts for months. Mine are blooming now and will probably last until early May."

Mary Schrock: "*Daisies*."

Diane Dietman: "My favorite flower is a toss-up between the *Lily of the Valley* and the *Shasta Daisy* because of their simple, yet delicate appearance. I especially look forward to and enjoy the sweet fragrance from the Lily of the Valley in May and the longevity of the bloom of the Shasta Daisy."

Jim and Lorraine Finch: "There are too many beautiful flowers to have just one favorite, but we'll give you our short list: 1) *Peony* for late spring—we have several plants of white, pink, red; 2) *Daylily* for mid-summer; and 3) *Hydrangea* for late summer into fall."

Cliff Schrock: "I don't remember ever having to answer this before; I've forgotten if I have. I like the *amaryllis* because it's colorful, it's the name of a character in my favorite musical "The Music Man," and it has Mary's name in it. That makes it easy to remember. I also like the look of the *peony*; its petals are so densely packed together."

Do you think that it will feel like spring by the time you are reading this monthly column? We hope so. Ahhh...the season of spring...time to put away the winter coats and sweaters, the baseball season gets underway, vegetable and flower gardens are planted, kids get out on their bikes, and spring cleaning. Yikes, spring cleaning! That has helped us brainstorm for our next Question of the Month. What we want to know is this – "What cleaning chore do you absolutely hate doing?" Answers will appear in the May edition. Be sure to describe the torture you feel from this duty. You can e-mail it to holyrcss@mindspring.com or write it on paper and put it in the "Newsletter" mailbox (bottom row, far left) no later than Tuesday, April 15.

---CLIFF SCHROCK
Newsletter Managing Editor

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 **Donna Bogen** and **Lydia Struzik** for planning the March 1 Coffee House Night. Special thanks to **Bill Weigle** for bringing his personal audio equipment and setting it up in the Fellowship Hall, which greatly enhanced the acoustic surrounding. See the Discipleship article on Page 3 for a list of those who helped with this event.

To the Holy Cross members who helped with either shopping, cooking or serving at the March 4 Community Supper at St. John's Episcopal-Bridgeport: **Cole Dowling**, **Lorraine** and **Jim Finch**, **Sheryl John**, **Nancy Sabol**, **David** and **Mary Ann Schiller**, **Michele** and **Rick Van Wart**, **Barbara White**, and **Pastor Witschy**.

To **Linda Suhr** who consistently serves as our church-office volunteer, helping out one morning a week.

To **Jim** and **Kim Atkinson** for setting up the wood cross with a purple drape in the sanctuary prior to Ash Wednesday.



COMMUNITY SUPPER

Serve the Lord by serving the needy a welcome meal; 115 meals served in March

SERVE. What does "to serve" mean? Webster's dictionary says: to be of use; to perform helpful acts; to aid and assist. This is what it means to volunteer at St. John's Episcopal Community Supper. Three Grace Lutheran-Stratford volunteers (Diane Schyhor, Marie Nocarro, Anna Schaaf) had notified us, so we knew we had six cooks, including HCLC members Barbara White, and Lorraine and Jim Finch. The day before our "first Tuesday" community supper tasks, Val and Rich Huydic offered to come if needed. They weren't needed, but we were so grateful to have them notify and offer their assistance rather than just show up. Rick and Michele Van Wart, Sheryl John, Cole Dowling and Pastor Witschy served 115 meals on Tuesday, March 4.



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. Money collected at our special collection on the first Sunday of every month is supplemented by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. If you are making out a check, make it payable to Holy Cross Lutheran with "community supper" on the memo line and put it in the red/white wood box in the back of the sanctuary. Our next community supper is on Tuesday, April 1. If you can volunteer your time, please put your name on the sheet found on the narthex table.

---DAVID and MARY ANN SCHILLER

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



---SHEPHERDS' COMMISSION

CELEBRATING APRIL BIRTHDAYS

APRIL 1: NICOLE DELMEDICO

APRIL 2: KARA HEREDIA

APRIL 3: ROBERT KILLIAN

APRIL 4: CATHERINE DIXON

APRIL 5: KAELEEN BOIVIE, MICHAEL SCHWEITZER

APRIL 7: JOHN ANANTHARAJ, PAUL HAGBERG

APRIL 8: BOBBY KRAVECS, SCOTT PARAY

APRIL 9: DONNA BOGEN

APRIL 10: DONALD ERICKSON

GORDON JOHNSON

APRIL 11: KELLEY GEFFERT

APRIL 12: TOM DOMANICK, KRISTEN ASMUS

APRIL 13: BRIAN CAMINITI, GARY DILALLA

APRIL 14: MARION DALE

APRIL 19: KATHERINE BIKE

APRIL 23: ANITA SCHOCH

RICHARD VAN WART



APRIL 24: SHERYL JOHN

GEORGE MORRIS

APRIL 25: JENZY HALLS

GEORGE STROMP

APRIL 26: STEPHANIE DOMANICK

APRIL 28: JENNIFER RENTZ

ALEX SELK

APRIL 29: DAN SENFT

THE WRITER WITHIN

Megachurches have nothing on Holy Cross; we offer a lot, on a smaller scale; case in point: Coffee House

Editor's note: A reminder about this column—Holy Cross Word began this new regular column called “The Writer Within” in our last issue. There are several meanings one could get from that title, but the simple one is that the column is being written by a newsletter staffer, hence a “writer within” the production of the newsletter.

A specific timeline escapes me, but it's been several years since the Christian church saw the advent of the megachurch. These churches, quite often in large population areas and with memberships in the thousands, are usually nondenominational; an example is the Lakewood Church run by Joel Osteen in Houston.

The attraction to these churches often is their enormous facilities (and parking lots!), flashy services, and the wide-ranging services they offer of a nonworship variety. They attract people who find it fascinating to belong to such an “everything under the sun/everything under one roof” operation.

We here in our normal-sized, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod Holy Cross Church can't compare to a megachurch in size and numbers. But from a structure point-of-view, we're not that far behind. By structure I mean our governing body of Board of Directors, chances for regular worship and education, and the opportunities to socialize. We even have a preschool. We have many of the structural things you'll find at a megachurch, just not the numbers or the money to put behind them.

But the idea that Holy Cross can offer the services—both worship and social—to satisfy its members is not new. Our church has been fulfilling the needs of its members since soon after we were formed. The troublesome aspect is why Holy Cross isn't viewed by more of its members as a second home. You could make a strong case that members can not only worship every week at Holy Cross but attend a social event of some kind as well.



As the King of Siam would say, “Tis a puzzlement” why all the work behind the scenes to create a second-home environment doesn't pay off to bring more members to church. We can only pray that the Holy Spirit becomes more fully aglow in our members so that we see our numbers increase all across the board.

Having said all this, I'd now like to celebrate a recent Holy Cross social event that was brilliant in its formation and execution and was even pretty decent attendance-wise.

On March 1 in the Fellowship Hall we held what was the first of its kind at Holy Cross: a Coffee House evening in which several members and friends got up—as you would at a coffee house—and sang some songs at an open microphone. Of course, at most coffee houses, the acts are more impromptu than what we had. Our performers were pretty much scheduled.

But the approximately 50 people in attendance got to have a fun night of listening to some fine performances, enjoy BYOB refreshments, plus appetizer-type food that was provided.

This was great entertainment, in a social atmosphere at our church, and by all rights there should have been many more people in attendance. This was a no-brainer event to attend, as you knew it would be when the idea to do it was first tossed around by Discipleship Director Donna Bogen, who then started asking around if others thought it was a viable idea. It was a clever addition to the types of social gatherings that make an overall church life desirable.

To recognize the performers, plus record this for church history, what follows is the evening's set list; it was led off by audio set-up man Bill Weigle:

March 1 Coffee House Set List:

Bill Weigle: Let It Be Me; Jambalaya (On the Bayou)

Mary Schrock: My Valentine; Mamunia; Time in a Bottle

Kim Atkinson: Beauty and the Beast; Colors in the Wind

Kathy Boivie and her sister, Mary: Going to the Chapel; Blessings (Laura Story lyrics)

Mary Ann Schiller singalong: Daisy; When Irish Eyes Are Smiling; The Band Played On; The Happy Wanderer; Yellow Rose of Texas; By the Light of the Silvery Moon; Let Me Call You Sweetheart; It's a Small World; When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain.

“Writer Within,” continues on Page 8

"Writer Within," continued from Page 7

Kerry Geffert: The Impossible Dream (Man of La Mancha); What I Did for Love (A Chorus Line); Bring Him Home (Les Miserables)

Meredith Lobb (friend of Otto, Mary and Jim Atkinson): The Water Is Wide (O Waly Waly); The Wind that Shakes the Barley

Bill Weigle: A Little Help from My Friends; Your Cheatin' Heart; Spooky Little Girl Like You; A Long Way to Travel (Mustard's Retreat); Don't Think Twice, It's Alright

Mary Schrock: Make You Feel My Love; I Need You

Kerry & Mary: Rocky Mountain High

Kerry, Bill & Mary: This Land Is Your Land

When you see this event—or any other church event advertised—be sure to be a part of the festivities to enjoy your church family and home.

--CLIFF SCHROCK

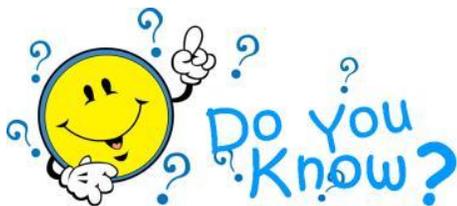
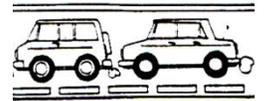
Holy Cross Word Staff

BULLETINS FROM ABROAD

If you are away from your Holy Cross family and worship at another church, be sure to drop off the service bulletin in the newsletter box. During the first quarter of this year we received bulletins from:

Anna Berger, who worshiped at two churches in Pennsylvania – St. John's Evangelical Lutheran in Friedensburg and Salem-Hetzel's Lutheran in Pine Grove.

Pastor and Amy Witschy, who worshiped at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran in Crossville, Tenn.



In 2013 Holy Cross
volunteers prepared
and served 1,213
meals to the poor
of the greater
Bridgeport area at
the Tuesday Night
Community Supper.

--A simple fact from our
Social Ministry Commission

CHURCH CHUCKLES

