

Fully Alive!

COMMUNICATING AND CELEBRATING THE MISSION AND MINISTRIES OF HOLY CROSS

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THE REAL JESUS

We will begin a new sermon series after Easter entitled “The Real Jesus” in conjunction with our Joining Jesus Seminar coming up on Saturday, April 20. Have you thought about who the real Jesus is? Maybe during Holy Week or around Easter there is a greater recognition of who Jesus is and what He has done. That has been one of the repeating themes through our Fruits of the Spirit sermon series – that Jesus did this all perfectly without sin. That means that He confronted sin with perfect patience. He mourned with perfect joy. He cleared the temple with perfect gentleness. He faced the garden with perfect peace. That is one of the amazing things about Jesus and His character. He is completely God and completely human. He is completely truthful and completely loving. When we think about the cross and resurrection, the same thing is true as well.

Would you consider yourself more of a cross person or an empty tomb person? There are times in our life when we need both. The amazing thing is that Jesus perfectly encapsulates the suffering of the cross and the glory of the empty tomb. Without

the cross there is no resurrection and without the resurrection there is no victory. Both are dependent on the other to provide their significance. Luther taught much on the theology of the cross and how suffering and hardship can actually bring us closer to God, but without the perspective of the resurrection and the hope of everlasting life, suffering and hardship become burdensome and unbearable. That is why Jesus said, “Take my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart.” He wanted us to know that He has overcome the world. Sometimes we can get caught up in arguing about whether Jesus is better represented on the cross or off of the cross. The truth of the matter is that both signify important aspects about our faith and life as a Christian.

It's totally fine if you like one more than the other, but remember you need both. He

was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification (Romans 4:25). If you think that Jesus should always be represented off of the cross, then you will be tempted to not have a proper view of suffering in our lives and the purification and holiness that it brings. If you think that Jesus should always be represented on the cross, then you will be tempted to allow the enemy too much ground in your life. Jesus' victory over the grave reminds us of our victory over sin because of what was already accomplished.

So regardless of whether you like the Lion or the Lamb better, always remember that you need both. Good Friday and Easter are necessary for the Christian faith; the cross and the empty tomb together are the most meaningful accomplishment in the history of mankind.

~Pastor Jeff Niederstadt



LETTER FROM THE HOLY CROSS PRESIDENT

*For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain
quiet, till her vindication shines out like the
dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch.
The nations will see your righteousness,
and all kings your glory...
Isaiah 62:1-2*

Dear People of God at Holy Cross,

On March 2, 2024, 27 members met for 3 ½ hours to discuss and plan for the future of Holy Cross. Ryan Dean created a fantastic “zoom room” to allow several to participate seamlessly from remote locations. Our Bylaws require periodic updates to our 5-year plan, but we wanted to place this in the context of God’s greater call for Holy Cross over time. To do this, Patty Clancy helped us look out 20 years to create a “Big Heavenly Audacious Goal” (BHAG), which is:

- A long-term goal that pushes the church to achieve greatness
- A clear, compelling goal that seems unreasonable, but you believe you can achieve it
- Has the “gulp factor” – meaning it’s a definite stretch beyond the obvious and status quo

Pastor Jeff opened with a Scriptural basis for “Isaiah Project II”, based on Isaiah 62, which holds that “For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent...”, aligning with our current Evangelism emphasis, and continuing with calls to action and God’s resulting blessings. Mark Matthias talked through our past 5-year journey and our commitments to be Missional, to multi-site ministry, and to external focus including Good Deeds and Good News.

Bryant Frey updated the group on the state of the Church and of Rochester. Rochester has been growing, but Christianity has declined. Most of the projected population growth will happen outside of Holy Cross’ neighborhood. If current trends continue,

- Rochester is projected to grow to over 160,000 by 2045
- 31% of Christian children are likely to become unaffiliated between ages 15 and 29
- By 2070 Christians may make up less than 50% of the US population

We discussed our “Hedgehog Concept” - what is the one thing we are deeply passionate about, that we could be best in the world at, and which drives our decisions and actions?

All were invited to share, and then small groups met to formulate our best BHAG ideas. This resulted in six potential BHAGs, which a small group will work to refine. Mark then led a discussion of potential 5-year scenarios, in which the group was split between modest growth and a larger jump of planned action and results. Pastor Jeff reassured people that this won’t be done by us (existing people) just working harder; rather where the Lord leads, He will provide the way (the means).

It was a morning given over to the future of our calling. Work to combine and refine the results is underway, and a more complete presentation will be made when ready. God blesses His people who trust Him and follow His leading!

~Mark Matthias, Congregation President

“And they shall be called The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord; and you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.”

Isaiah 62:12

DISCIPLESHIP CORNER: A DISCIPLE FLOCKS

At this time of year, I see geese returning and settling into parks and lots along the Zumbro River. They flock to areas where they will nest this spring, as they raise the next generation of goslings in their resting place. These geese remind us that, in season, we too flock to our resting grounds.

To see this in action, we turn to Peter and John. When they first hear the account of Jesus’ resurrection from the women in John 20, they take off running to the place where Christ was believed to rest. The first ever Easter season causes these disciples to move, without holding back. It is at the

tomb where the promises of resurrection, which Jesus spoke to them, finally click. He is not here, He is risen indeed!

We too flock together in various seasons. During the season of Easter, we intentionally return to old grounds to praise our Savior. With crowds gathered on Easter morning, we proclaim praises to the lamb who conquers death. We come out of our homes and move with Jesus. Don’t hold back now, for disciples flock. Peter and John flocked to the other disciples. They gathered in the upper room, they walked with Christ for 40 days, then they

congregated with the church at Pentecost. The whole time, Jesus’ disciples flocked together.

In our lives of discipleship, we gather with our flock. Yes, for celebrations such as Easter, but also in weeks beyond. The community of disciples runs to return and celebrate the risen Savior. Flock to your resting ground this season, the place where Christ gives His grace to you. In Easter and every season, disciples gather to be filled with Christ, as we run and move in this world.

~Pastor Jordan Schut

JOINING JESUS TRAINING SEMINAR

Joining Jesus On His Mission Training Seminar Saturday, April 20 9am-12pm

Everyone is invited. Bring your neighbor or a family member and learn how to live a missionary lifestyle. Refreshments will be provided. There is no cost, and no registration is required. Special guest speaker is Rev. Greg Finke from www.dwelling114.org

What is Dwelling 1:14?

Has Jesus been messing with you, too? Are you ready to move from mission statements to mission lifestyle? Are you ready to move from mission inspiration and programming to mission implementation and discipling? **Then it's time to join Jesus on His mission.** And Dwelling 1:14 can help.

The good news is that Jesus is already on the move in your community. He's already doing the heavy lifting of pursuing His Father's mission in the life of every person

you meet. Dwelling 1:14 simply shows you how to seek, recognize, and respond to what Jesus is already up to... and then disciple others to do the same. Let your mission adventure with Jesus begin!

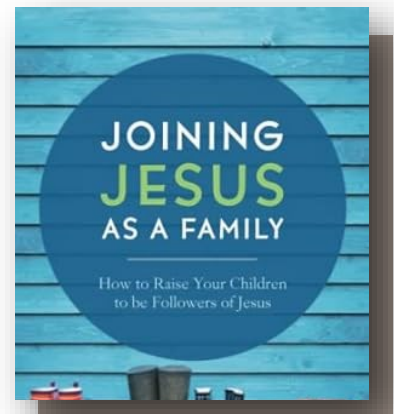
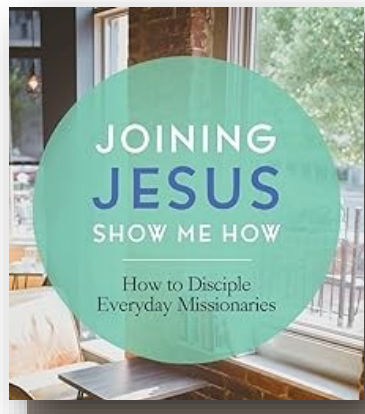
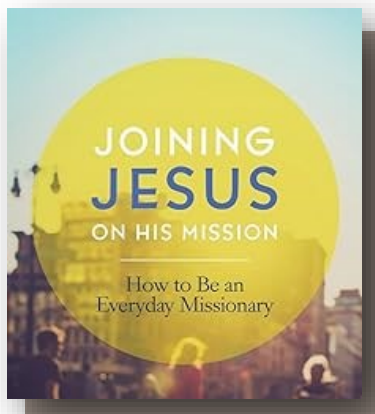
What are some of the concepts that may be covered during the seminar?

- A. **What is the mission of God?** According to God, His mission is to redeem and restore all things through Jesus. And we get to help. It's what we were made for and saved for. Discipling, then, is the means for showing the people of God how to participate in the mission of God as a daily lifestyle.
- B. **What is discipling?** According to Jesus in the Gospels, discipling is the process of showing the people of God how to participate in the mission of God as a daily lifestyle.
- C. **What will I learn how to do?** You will find out how to seek, recognize, and respond to what Jesus is already up to

in the lives of people around me.

- D. **What are the 5 questions, and what do they have to do with the Joining Jesus training?** The 5 questions are used to look for and evaluate what Jesus is up to in our lives. The 5 questions are a foundation for the pattern of discipling others in our lives. The 5 questions are:

1. **Seeking the Kingdom:** How did you see God at work this week?
2. **Hearing from Jesus:** What has Jesus been teaching you in His word?
3. **Talking with people:** What kind of conversations are you having with pre-Christians?
4. **Doing good:** What good can we do around here?
5. **Ministering through Prayer:** How can we help you in prayer?



RAISE THE ROOF TRACKING

As of the printing of Fully Alive, we have exciting news to share on this project fundraising. We have 14 pledges totaling \$33,250. Of this, \$7,250 has been received in gifts through March 17, 2024. We continue to ask members and friends of Holy Cross to join us in "Raising the

Roof" and raise the remaining \$16,750 to meet the \$50,000 target for the campaign. Your pledge is needed.



ILLUMINATION STATION: GETTING TO KNOW OUR FAMILY @ HOLY CROSS

SPOTLIGHT ON MARK & PAM MATTHIAS

A Minnesota gal, Pam was born in Fergus Falls and was raised on a dairy farm near Herman, a small town about 40 miles south. She was baptized and confirmed at Kongsvinger Lutheran Church, their family church in Donnelly, located 10 miles from Herman. Mark was born in Whittier, CA, and was baptized at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Whittier. Soon after, his family moved to his mom's hometown of Waconia, MN, where he attended Trinity Lutheran Church and School and later Mayer Lutheran High School.

During their sophomore year, Mark and Pam met in a music theory class at Concordia College, Moorhead, MN. After time in the Twin Cities, Mark and Pam moved to Rochester when Mark was offered a position with Mayo Clinic in Finance. They both have shared God's gifts at Holy Cross in a variety of ways. Pam enjoyed serving in various Drama offerings, and helped with KidZAlive, VBS, and the prayer shawl ministry. She has also volunteered at RCLS and in its library. For years Mark has focused his talents in the worship ministry, and in leadership on the Executive Council. He previously served as an RCLS Rep for Holy Cross, as Treasurer on the RCLS Board, and coached Volleyball.

Pam and Mark have two daughters, Kara and Maren. The majority of the time Kara lives in Ireland, and Maren lives in Waconia, MN. Professionally, Pam is a retired teacher, librarian, costume designer, and seamstress. Mark works in Finance and accounting, within the health care industry. They both love to travel, especially in Europe. They enjoy puzzles, reading, and family time. "We have an extensive library collected over the years, and relish the feel and sense of a good book in our hands." Pam also likes to crochet and make crafts. Mark likes to hike, work in his trees (their backyard), and enjoys music. Mark's favorite Bible book is Isaiah, with its clearly fulfilled prophecies and promises, like found in Isaiah 41:10 where God says, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Pam's favorite book is Psalms, which "is her favorite way to speak to God, and there is a prayer for every need!" Pam would love to meet Mary Magdalene someday for, "her story is one of redemption and courage, grace and hope. To walk with her for a day would be such a blessing."



COUNCIL CORNER: HIGHLIGHTS FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Council met on Tuesday: March 19, 2024

Devotions and Prayer: Our focus for Holy Cross in 2024 is evangelism. Pastor Jeff shared a devotion "Exploring Outside". Colossians 4:5 - Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity.

- Council approved the housing allowances for Pastor Jeff and Pastor Jordan and a supplemental payment to support Pastor Jordan (medical/funeral).

- Attendance figures reported for February's worship services - Averaging 131 persons a week in person, plus online units averaged 29 worshipping via hclt.tv New packaged communion elements (easier to open) are now available. Psalm

122:1 - I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

- HC 5-year Planning Workshop (Mar. 2) was summarized; outcomes were discussed. A Strategic Planning Team is meeting to further develop the goals.
- HC Communications Team Charter was extended from March 31 to June 30, 2024.
- Discipleship Team is looking for another couple to serve on the Greeting Team. See Karen Hutton, Sherri Emedo, or Ernie.
- Outreach Ministry: On March 9, HC **Ruby's Pop-up Pantry** distributed 400 shares to 248 vehicles. **CarePortal** (CP) continues to grow in the Rochester area. A new Community Champion has joined CP:

Zumbro Valley BNI. After reading the Post Bulletin article on the CP article in the Post Bulletin, someone donated \$1,000. A few churches have also increased their support and participation.

- Trustees: repairs and painting in the Sanctuary have been completed. Roofing solutions discussed. Both Sanctuary and Parish Hall roofs will be replaced later this summer.
- Please continue to pray for RCLS. Interviews and visits with Teacher and Principal candidates, maintenance and repairs, Strategic Planning on April 4, and a high enrollment of 406 students for the coming year.

~ Jo Dean, Holy Cross Council Secretary

“THE CHOSEN” SEASON 4 LIFEGROUPS TO BEGIN IN APRIL



The TV show "The Chosen" tells the story of Jesus and His disciples' ministry. This is the biggest attempt at a crowdsourced media series to date. The narrative of John the

Baptist from his conception to his execution opens this fourth season, and it closes with the beginnings of the Palm Sunday story. The bad news is that before the episodes of "The Chosen" can be included on the app, the production company must address certain legal and financial issues. We rely on the LifeGroup hosts to broadcast live from the app to their TV. Having said that, we have eight wonderful LifeGroups that will host, screen,

and discuss every episode of season 4. Our LifeGroups are scheduled to meet on Sunday evening, Tuesday morning, Wednesday night, Thursday night, Friday afternoon, and Saturday afternoon. We are assuming that all will be ready to go by the 2nd week of April. The signups have begun and are filling rapidly. Our sign-up is posted on the Holy Cross website.

— Ernie Freudenburg
Connecting Coordinator

FROM THE HOLY CROSS FACILITIES TEAM

A huge “thank you” goes out to Linda Thesing and Anne Mickow for their years of service as Holy Cross’s Library Committee. Over the past years, we have seen less use of the library. As a result, it was agreed to limit the library space, as most items today are online, such as books and Bible studies. We have retained some popular fiction as well as faith-based reference books, which are still available in the space we now refer to as the Office and Conference Room. Both Linda and Anne worked diligently sorting through books, removing those that had been rarely checked out and keeping popular books. Unused books were sent to interested

congregants, Edenbrook Nursing Home, Minnesota Teen and Adult Challenge, and Friends of the Library.

Thank you Julie Beise for sorting through Bible study materials, which are now organized and neatly stored in the workroom in a labeled cabinet. A thank you also goes to Jessica Kuck, Carol Lofquist, and Ken Schultz for cleaning out and organizing cupboards and shelving in the office/workroom. They consolidated office materials and files and opened up more storage space, creating a better work environment for Jessica and, at the same time, creating a more defined, uncluttered conference area. In the near future, look

for new shelving for Care Portal “drop off” items.

Also, we appreciate that Jo Dean will be organizing historical files, consolidating Council minutes and annual meeting reports. Her plan is to eventually have all these materials scanned into Holy Cross records!

THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE WHO WORK DILIGENTLY TO KEEP GOD’S HOUSE ORDERLY SO THAT WE MAY BETTER ENGAGE IN OUR GOD-GIVEN MINISTRIES.

NIGHTLIFE YOUTH SERVANT EVENT 2024

One of the values we hold at Holy Cross is that of service. Following Christ’s example, we live lives of service for the benefit of our family, friends, and neighbors. This occurs through the people who give of their time to distribute food, provide beds, and welcome all into our church family. Service is noted in Holy Cross’ vision as an effort to serve others, impacting our community and beyond.

It’s the “and beyond” that we are highlighting this summer with our NightLife Servant Event. Youth in grades 9-12 are invited to join Pastor Jordan and the crew as we head beyond our community to the

grounds of Lutheran Valley Retreat in Colorado. There, we will serve a brand new community which shares the gospel message of Christ with hundreds of people who flock to the campgrounds.

This trip will take place June 8-15, as we travel together to the remote areas of Pike National Forest. While there, we will serve with other youth from churches across the country by caring for the trails, buildings, and grounds and preparing this ministry site for future generations. To join the servant crew, speak with Pastor Jordan about Servant

“Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Matthew 20:28

Event 2024 and hear all the details. We hope to be models of Christ-like service with you, so make plans to serve with us this summer!



SUMMER CHILDREN'S VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Get ready for a jungle adventure at Holy Cross this summer. Holy Cross will be taking a cruise on the Great Jungle Journey for VBS, in the evenings of July 22-25. Grab your safari hats and explorer goggles as we

take a ride to learn how the truths of God's Word answer life's biggest questions!

What children do you know who you can invite to join the journey? Invite them now!



SAINTS ALIVE



Saints Alive Senior Ministry Relaunched after a Number of Years of Hiatus

What a delight it was on March 13 to have so many of our senior members come and learn about the Saints Alive ministry. It was time to revive the Saints Alive senior ministry. We scheduled our event to begin at 10:00 a.m. and end at 11:45. Our Lounge was filled with 20 seniors who expressed interest, examined a proposed plan for the Saints Alive ministry,

contributed their thoughts, and willingly agreed to serve on a steering committee or a visitation team for Saints Alive. Our usual meeting is set on the second Thursday of each month, however there may be other opportunities to connect at an outside event.

~ Ernie Freudenburg,
Connecting Coordinator

CAREPORTAL UPDATE

CarePortal

"Let the godly sing for joy to the Lord; it is fitting for the pure to praise Him."

Psalm 33:1

God is blessing our CarePortal ministry in heavenly ways – let us praise Him!! In January the Post Bulletin ran a story on CarePortal, which resulted in 15 new community responders and a \$1,000 donation!! In February the Wall Street Journal called CarePortal the Uber of Foster Care, stating that Uber is to ride-sharing as CarePortal is to care-sharing! As the CarePortal community continues to grow, more of the Church is sharing in the caring of the most vulnerable kids and families in our community.

Calvary E Free recently joined the CarePortal Community as our 9th CarePortal church. MetCalf Moving & Storage joined as our 3rd Community Sponsor



(they will be donating men and trucks to pick up large donations of furniture). Zumbro Valley BNI Chapter joined as our 3rd Community Champion to help with funding requests and deliveries (young men and trucks). It's not just the Church sharing in the caring, it's also our local businesses! Praise God for all He is doing in Rochester!!

CarePortal church participation is also improving. The other churches combined responded to only 21% of the requests in 2023 – but this past month, they responded to 62% of the requests!

Save These Dates!

- April 22 - 24** – CarePortal is hosting their first national conference in Kansas City, and ALL are invited to attend. Holy Cross has been nominated for CarePortal church of the year!! Winners will be announced at the conference. For more information go to conference.careportal.org
- May 7** - Holy Cross will be hosting another CarePortal Community Gathering. We have some powerful testimonies lined up, and we hope to get some media coverage as well!
- July 4** - *Possum Trot* will be released in theaters. This is a movie about the true story that inspired Adrien Lewis to create CarePortal.

~ Denise Frey
CarePortal Ambassador – Olmsted County



FEBRUARY TREASURER REPORT

	Feb 2024	YTD Feb 2024	YTD Feb 2023
General fund receipts	\$41,430	\$76,515	\$99,465
General fund expenses	\$57,447	\$108,854	\$93,713
Inflow/(outflow)	(\$16,017)	(\$32,339)	\$5,752

February receipts were improved from January at \$10,357/week, however still below the average \$12,750/week forecast needed to cover 2024 budgeted expenses. February expenses were slightly above budget and reflect Fellowship/events spend from the Annual meeting and funeral. Additionally we had our share of

late snowplowing expenses.

Designated receipts were \$1,382, largest being \$665 for Good Samaritan Fund, \$336 from Outreach Garden and remainder in smaller amounts across a variety of funds. Designated expenses were \$6,553 with \$3,701 on live streaming

equipment, \$1,500 deposit on future youth trip.

Care Portal was \$2,050 donations and \$1,031 spent. Ruby's Pantry was \$9,891 in receipts and \$8,929 out for a net revenue of \$962 available for Care Portal.

End of February Checking is at \$92,125.61 and savings at \$174,274.54 in savings. LCEF funds in Certificates of Deposit with LCEF are \$85,418 Regedahl). Additionally we have \$109,950 in T-bill Investments at Stifel. \$100,000 of the Stifel Investments are earmarked for "Raise the Roof".

RCLS UPDATE

Little Mermaid, Jr., was a spectacular success! RCLS is so proud of the entire cast and crew who delivered a remarkable rendition of the classic story to sold out audiences.



The RCLS community also recently celebrated "Read Across America Day." Students wore pajamas and spent the afternoon reading in their chapel families and making bookmarks to celebrate our love for reading!

The end of the third quarter is Friday, March 22, which means spring break is right around the corner! Before a much-needed reprieve, there are many exciting activities happening. Softball, Lego Club, and Chess and Games Club are gearing up to begin. Following spring break,



the fun activities continue with the fourth grade "States Fair" on April 12, VIP Day on April 19, Spring Music Concert on May 9 and RCLS Field Day on May 17!

~Laura Rhee
Holy Cross Rep for RCLS

GET READY FOR WORSHIP IN THE COURTYARD

Who do you know who would be blessed by the Word of God (especially the book of Revelation), the Worship of God (in the great outdoors!), the welcoming people of Holy Cross (for God's glory), and the gorgeous Courtyard (just west of Holy Cross' front entrance)?

Invite them to join us!

Worship in the Courtyard

Begins Sunday, May 26, at TEN O'CLOCK!

Note the Summer time change; continues through Sunday, September 1!

Come dressed for the weather*, with lawn chair and Bible in hand.

Contact Jeanne Block, womensrace@gmail.com, to help with the Set-up and Take-down some Sundays this summer.

*Watch hclc.tv, your email, or the "Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Rochester" Facebook page in case of inclement weather, in which case we'd meet indoors.



April Issue of Fully Alive!

Non-Profit Org.

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JOINING JESUS ON HIS MISSION

How to Be an
Everyday Missionary

Joining Jesus Seminar

Saturday, April 20
9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Learn how you can be a
missionary in your own
neighborhood and workplace.

Guest speaker Greg Finke,
author of
Joining Jesus book series

Everyone is welcome!