

Fully Alive!

COMMUNICATING AND CELEBRATING THE MISSION AND MINISTRIES OF HOLY CROSS

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THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE GOSPEL

One of the greatest reminders about stewardship is that our whole lives as Christians are defined by being stewards of the Gospel. It is a great reminder for us that even before the fall into sin in Genesis 3, that Adam and Eve were charged as stewards, and so are we. The question then becomes not whether we are stewarding our lives or the Gospel, but how much of our lives are we stewarding toward the kingdom and God's work? Because all of the items in which we normally evaluate stewardship are finite like our time, talents, and treasures – that means there will be some that are used well and some that are used unwisely. In the parable of the talents, Jesus' point was not how many talents you have; it was how wisely are you using what you have been given.

As we have talked about stewardship over this past month and have been emphasizing it this year at Holy Cross, I hope you are evaluating and trying to grow in the grace of stewardship of your life for the Gospel. Your time is limited. It is finite. There is an amount that you have to work with and you have to determine how you will

use it. Some will be for noble purposes, some will be for random purposes, and some hopefully will not be used for ignoble purposes. Your talents are limited. I'm not saying you can't improve or that you're untalented. I am just acknowledging the same as in my life that there are a finite number of talents that I possess and that are useful to myself, others, and God. Some will certainly be used for God, some for others, and some for self. Your treasures are finite. I hope and pray that you are making wise investments, your money is growing, and your income capacities are increasing, but no matter how much that may be true, you will always only have so much. There will always be a pie and there are only so many pieces that you can cut. What percentage of the pie is being used for your stewardship of the Gospel? What pieces do you slim down when everyone is trying to get more of your pie, including inflation, property taxes, school millages, ministries, and the church?

These are difficult questions during difficult times. How will you respond? Will you bury your treasure in the ground in your

back yard, or will you trust God and make difficult decisions that are required of stewards? I think one thing that will help you in your stewardship of the Gospel is remembering that God is not asking you to do more, serve more, and give more. That seems arduous and difficult and painstaking. That doesn't mean that there aren't wasteful habits, guilty pleasures, and careless spending that needs to be changed, but that is not the main point that God wants you to understand about stewardship. The main point that I think will help you tremendously as you think about stewardship is that it's ALL His. Every bit of time you have, every talent that you use, and every dollar that you spend are His. When you have that perspective, the right thing becomes plain and the wrong things become glaring. Whatever you do – do it as unto the Lord, for it is the Lord Christ you are serving. Do you think that the God who made the eye doesn't see? He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and all of the silver and gold are His.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

(CONTINUED) THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE GOSPEL

As we talk about stewardship as a church and as we talk about ministry plans, sanctuary updates, and serving capacities, let us all remember that it's all His. What does He want? What does He say? What honors Him? What gives Him glory? When we start asking those questions, then we

will be much more likely to find the right answers. Lord, help us all to see you rightly and all that we control as part of your possession so that we can be the stewards that you have called us to be.

~Pastor Jeff Niederstadt

LETTER FROM THE HOLY CROSS PRESIDENT

Dear Holy Cross Family,

On October 1, we welcomed to Holy Cross Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador, a S. Wisconsin District Executive and Synod leader on Stewardship. Dr. Meador taught on the Theology of Stewardship during the Connecting Hour, and led the Philippians Conference that afternoon with a discussion of the Stewardship Culture and our place in it. His words brought new clarity to the term Stewardship as intended by God, applicable to you and to me.

The foundation for our understanding begins in Genesis with the creation of man. In Gen. 1:26 God says "Let us make man in our image...", which gives us our identity – a reflection of his will in the created order. And our purpose? In Gen. 2:15, "The Lord God took man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." There you have it – we, a reflection of God here on earth, are created to work and take care of his creation. Essentially, we are the conduit between God and creation!

Of course, the Fall happened and sin entered the world – but then Dr. Meador showed how this links to the message of the Gospel, which in fact is what we are to

steward: "...in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19). For example, when you bring your children to the font in Baptism, you are living your life of Stewardship.

The afternoon Conference focused on the Culture of Stewardship, and whether we are intentional (and effective) in our stewardship culture. Again, our stewardship is based not on what we do but on who we are (created in God's image), recognizing God brings his gifts to us and we care for others – and all is done "for the sake of the gospel," bringing the ministry of reconciliation to those right outside our front door.

How is God calling you? What is he asking of you? How are you responding to the working of the Holy Spirit? How do we take the blessings in our life and truly care for others – both in the church and beyond our walls?

Two opportunities rise to the top in my mind currently; first, there are opportunities for service, whether it be in a ministry (Kids4Truth, CarePortal, Greeters Ministry)

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

2 Cor. 5:18-19

or in congregational leadership on Council, where we are caretakers for carrying out the mission and vision for this family.

Second, on November 4, I'd encourage you to come hear about our facility activities, and in particular the vision for the Sanctuary. How can our spaces be at their best and most effective in carrying out our calling?

I encourage you to continue a life of worship, with a priority on participation in the life of this people. We need you – and your help to carry out our mission of "Helping People Know, Live and Share the Love of Christ"! God bless.

~Mark Matthias, Congregation President

CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES

Join us on at Holy Cross on Sunday, November 19th at 6:30pm for a presentation by Trevor Rubenstein. Chosen People Ministries' mission is to pray for, evangelize, disciple, and serve Jewish people everywhere and to help fellow believers do the same. Join us on this special evening to

hear about sharing the Gospel with the Jewish people and the Biblical significance of the land of Israel. Especially in light of recent events in Israel we lift up the people and land of Israel as we pray for the peace of Jerusalem.



CHOSEN PEOPLE
MINISTRIES

RCLS UPDATE

The Mystery at Shady Acres was a smash hit! The audience loved participating in the suspenseful “who did it” play. Hats off to directors Kim Schauer and Dan Kuball for another successful fall production!

The cross country team also enjoyed a successful season. Several runners qualified for the national meet, which will be held Saturday, October 21st. Volleyball and soccer seasons are also in full swing, and basketball will begin later this fall. Good luck to all of our Bobcat student athletes!

Each year the 8th grade class helps plan the chapel offering projects for the year. For the first quarter, students have selected projects focused on helping those affected by natural disasters, including the earthquake in Morocco (through Lutheran World Relief) and those affected by the wildfires in Hawaii (through Emmanuel Lutheran School in Maui). The 8th graders have also organized a winter clothing drive, which will benefit our neighbors right here in Olmsted County. Feel free to bring in your new or gently used coats, hats,

mittens, boots, scarves, and snow pants. Donation bins are located in front of the RCLS office.

We want to extend a warm welcome to Emma Hansen, our new clubhouse director, and Melanie Hoppenworth, part-time senior accountant. We also bid farewell to Mark Pfeiler, who has faithfully served as the facilities manager at RCLS for seven years.

Rochester Central Lutheran School (RCLS) has begun the process to call a principal,

elementary educator and early childhood educator for the start of the 2024-2025 school year. The Board of Directors is seeking names of potential candidates for consideration and would appreciate your prayers for the call committees and school during this time. Please email Mr. Meier at mameier@rcls.net with any potential candidates for teachers and Phillip Heaton, President of the RCLS Board of Directors, at phheaton@rcls.net with principal candidates.

~Laura Rhee, Holy Cross Rep for RCLS



DISCIPLESHIP CORNER

Welcome to our Discipleship Corner. Come back every month for ideas, inspiration, and stories on living a disciplined life!

Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” (John 20:21)

Responsibility of the Disciple

“I didn’t do it.” “Someone else can get it.” “That’s not my job.”

These are common phrases you may hear when asking children to help clean up. I recall many afternoons asking children to pick up trash around a picnic table, only to get a flurry of these responses.

Kids are hyper-focused upon what is and isn’t their responsibility. While you imagine

similar experiences in your own families, don’t forget that adults are also susceptible to these same answers. “I didn’t do it, so I don’t need to help clean today.” “We need more volunteers for kid’s ministry, but someone else can get it.” “There are people who need to hear the gospel, but we called pastor(s) because that’s not my job.” We are people who are good at deflecting responsibility.

This isn’t what Jesus teaches us. “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” Jesus’ words in John 20 remind us that we, like His disciples, are sent out, called to go into the world. By virtue of being a Christian, you have inherited Christ’s calling to proclaim the good news. This is a

high calling, one given by Jesus Himself.

The Son has called you; you are sent as a disciple. Jesus has made you responsible by His dying and rising again. The Holy Spirit fills you with faith to carry the gospel. And the Father places you in His creation so that you may share in the responsibility of Jesus. “I didn’t do it.” No, you didn’t, Jesus did. “Someone else can get it.” The Holy Spirit did; He gave you faith. “That’s not my job.” In His infinite wisdom, the Father has prepared and equipped you for just that task. So, we rejoice in God’s purpose for us, to be responsible for sharing His gospel with the world.

~Pastor Jordan Schut

ILLUMINATION STATION: GETTING TO KNOW OUR FAMILY @ HOLY CROSS

INTRODUCING JOHN & BRIANNA AND THEIR FAMILY!

Brianna was born in Wisconsin, baptized as an infant, grew up in Arden Hills, Minnesota, and was confirmed at North Heights Lutheran Church. John was baptized at College Park United Methodist in Maryland, and was mainly raised and confirmed here, at Holy Cross. John and Brianna met through the Christian card game, Redemption. "I'm not sure when exactly we first met but we did not have any interest between us until I graduated from high school and was on my way to an internship at the International House of Prayer in Kansas City, MO. At that time, John had purchased his first home in Minnesota, where we lived after we got married a few years later. Our wedding day took place on April 1st, 2017, so our anniversary is in fact April Fool's Day." John visited several churches as he worked his way up at Hy-Vee. When a Rochester Hy-Vee store had a job opening for a position John wanted, he was excited to come back to Holy Cross as a family. As soon as John knew he had the job, he contacted Cindy Wessel and said "You've got to meet my wife. She will want to lead worship with you!" John knew Cindy from his time at Holy Cross as a child. Brianna met Cindy, who was quick to welcome her into the worship at Holy Cross. John is the store manager of the nearby Hy-Vee, where you can see his smiling face on the picture at every register. "I am a stay-at-home mom with my 3 kiddos who many at church have come to know and love." Their son JJ is John's miniature. He is in Kindergarten, loves his sisters, singing, building things, is quite a complex thinker, and is very active. Melody (4) is spunky, fun, loves her siblings, playing, and dancing -often at church. "I think it's great she wants to praise Jesus in that way." Luxanna was born on Christmas Eve, appropriate as her name means "Lady of Light". She is teething, loves to watch her siblings, and anything that lights up, sings, or talks to her. She is a smiler. Brianna loves to sing and play piano to worship Jesus. She also enjoys creating jewelry, making new from old, and repairing jewelry. She has sold at markets and online, but much less since their third child was born. John and Brianna enjoy playing board games, arcades when traveling, and family movie nights. John enjoys dancing, playing Redemption, and hiking. John recently went on a trip to the Grand Canyon with his dad and brother. Family trips include Wisconsin Dells and Duluth. Brianna and John are big fans of pasta and Olive Garden. John really appreciates John 11:35, "Then Jesus wept." Brianna's favorite Bible verses are Psalm 119:105 and 1 John 5:12. "The first verse was partially due to a song that came out by Amy Grant. I used to dance to it in my Grandma's basement as a child. The second verse is the one that helped me decide I wanted to follow Jesus at 5-6 years old." Holy Cross Family, please take time to visit with and get to know the Earley family.



CONNECTING TO THE NEXT GENERATION



One of the most important gifts that God has given to us is our immediate and extended family. As with any gift that God gives to us, He also guides us in the stewardship of that gift. In Psalm 145 we read these words: "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts. On the glorious

splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate." (ESV) This is just one of the many places in Scripture where we are told to be good stewards of the Good News and the wondrous acts that we experience in Jesus' name.

I am becoming more and more convinced that "declaring the mighty acts" and the "wondrous works" is not limited to Bible stories and the message of the good news of salvation. Certainly, that is first and foremost. However, if we keep secret the events of our life that have shaped and confirmed our faith in the risen Savior, we are forgetting the importance of family and

the other people God gives to us. God's greatness is to be praised! One way we do that is telling the next generation the mighty acts and wondrous deeds that have convinced us that our heavenly Father has created us in love, He has redeemed us purely by His grace, and He daily strengthens and preserves us to tell the story of our faith life to the next generation. We have two LifeGroups presently studying the topic of the Power of Your Story. I pray that the enthusiasm for future LifeGroups working through this process will grow, becoming a natural part of the fabric of our congregation.

~ Ernie Freudenburg

YOU HAVE SOMETHING SIGNIFICANT TO GIVE: PRAYER

In the book “Why Pray?” John F. DeVries writes that “the joy and excitement of being a follower of Christ is found right here: in being able to look at the needs of the world and to know you have something significant to give to every single need.”

What a wonderful opportunity WE have to lift up our fellow members of Holy Cross, friends, family, and the world to pray for them.

In James 5:16 the Lord tells us, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”

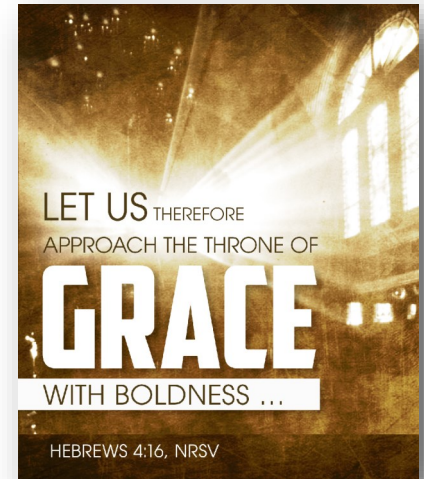
Who are the Prayer Warriors? The Prayer Warriors is a team of individuals from Holy Cross who are devoted pray for prayer concerns as requested on Connection Cards, via emails, and from participants in Ruby’s Pantry.

Could YOU serve as a Prayer Warrior?

We just ask two things of our prayer team: that you take time to lift up the requests to God with faith in God and His promises, and that you keep the prayer requests confidential.

If you would like to be a part of Prayer Warriors, contact Sherri Emedo at prayers@holycross-church.org.

How may we pray with YOU? If you have a prayer request for yourself, those close to you, the Church, or the world, submit it to prayers@holycross-church.org or submit it on your Connection Card.



THE LIFE OF NIGHTLIFE

The teens of NightLife have been living out Holy Cross’ vision to “Share life together.” October was full of life together shared at events, movies, and service. One highlight was assisting with the dinner offered at the Philippians Conference. The crew was present and ready to serve, restock, and have fun giving back to our Holy Cross community.

The good times don’t stop there. This month, join us for rock climbing at Roca

with our sister churches in Rochester before we break for Thanksgiving. This next event will be Sunday, November 12th from 6:30pm-8:30pm.

With all this happening, we can’t forget the reason why we gather. NightLife gathers for fun, friends, and always for fellowship in faith. We are reminded in Ephesians 3:17-19, “so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to

comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” If you haven’t joined us for NightLife before, consider checking it out. We’d love to join in life and faith together with all our 7-12 graders!

~Pastor Jordan Schut



CAREPORTAL COMMUNITY GATHERING



"Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."

Hebrews 10:24

This was the theme verse for the CarePortal Community Gathering Holy Cross hosted on Tue., October 24th – and we were definitely all spurred on toward love and good deeds!! This gathering brought together over 40 people in the community who have been involved with CarePortal, and also people who showed up just to hear what CarePortal was all about. It was a night of connecting, hearing testimonials, and praising God for all He has done through CarePortal – in Olmsted County and across the nation.

What do people like best about CarePortal? This is some of the feedback we received: "The focus on the care of children in our Rochester community." "Meeting real needs." "Connecting with people and con-

necting them to church." "Many ways to help." "People helping people." "Helping people in Jesus' name!"

The connections and recommendations coming out of this gathering will be used to keep CarePortal growing in Olmsted County. It's very evident that there are many more volunteers, churches, and businesses in our community who want to help people – and CarePortal provides an easy, seamless way to connect people with real needs to people who want to help.

Many, many thanks to everyone at Holy Cross who helped make this gathering such a huge success – you are all so very much appreciated!! God has blessed our congregation with so many amazing talents, gifts, and hearts for Jesus. To God be the Glory!

*~Denise Frey,
CarePortal Ambassador
Olmsted County*



**"Let us consider
how we may
spur one
another on
toward love and
good deeds."**

Hebrews 10:24



KIDS 4 TRUTH AND JESUS ~FROM PASTOR JORDAN SCHUT

Kids 4 Truth is currently on my favorite theme of all, Jesus! The year began by learning about God's Law in the Ten Commandments; now, kids are diving into who Jesus is and why he died and rose again for us. It is in Jesus that we see that whole picture of God's love on display as recounted in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

With Advent approaching, Kids 4 Truth will take a break during Advent and the holiday season with our last night of 2023 being Wednesday, November 15th. We will return in the new year on Wednesday, January 10th. Ask your kids, grandkids, or the kids sitting near you in worship what they are learning about Jesus. He is not only their way, truth, and life, but yours as well. May Christ guide our kids, our hearts, and our minds as we head into the Advent season and prepare to celebrate His birth on earth!

**"For we are
God's
handiwork,
created in Christ
Jesus to do good
works, which
God prepared in
advance for us
to do."**

Eph. 2:10

COUNCIL CORNER: HIGHLIGHTS FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Council met on Tuesday: Oct. 17, 2023.

Devotions and Prayer: Continuing our focus on Stewardship for 2023, Pastor Jeff shared a devotion on three gifts, from Psalm 128:1-2. Fear of the LORD, faith, and stewardship go together, as they all flow from the same source, God our creator. Adam and Eve were the first stewards, told to work and keep the Garden of Eden. Their sin and failure to fear the Lord changed the picture for mankind. Stewardship would never be enough until Jesus arrived. He restores! And through the Holy Spirit faith is renewed and strengthened! We are now able to follow God's direction to 'work and tend the garden' by being Stewards of the Gospel to others.

Pastor Jeff's Report: Pastor highlighted the Cue Net program, from Concordia Education, that he is helping lead to familiarize non-Lutheran teachers to the LCMS faith that is taught and lived at RCLS. Pastor encouraged the congregation's participation in the many upcoming events, including the morning meeting on the Sanctuary Updates - Saturday, November 4 to hear more about the vision of enhancing our Sanctuary worship space. PLEASE come to hear more about these exciting ideas and be part of the conversation! Other events include Trunk or Treat on Oct. 31, and The Chosen People Ministries

presentation on the evening of Sunday, Nov. 19.

Pastor Jordan's Report: Pastor highlighted the Kids and Youth Sunday and Wednesday ministries are all going strong. It would be awesome to have a few more volunteers for the Wednesday evening Kids 4 Truth offering. Please prayerfully consider and let him know. Even helping one or two times a month would be a wonderful help in stewarding the Gospel for our next generation.

Cindy Wessel's Director of Worship Report: Cindy highlighted Kidz Alive/Youth Now Christmas that is being planned for December 17, Sanctuary renovation ideas, active recruitment for the PT Office Admin position, and on November 19, the RCLS Concert Band will be joining us in worship.

Treasurer's Report: Roger Lindahl reported general fund giving for September was \$40,313 and expenses were \$44,177 with a deficit of \$3,864. September receipts were \$10,078/week which is 14% below the average of \$11,500/week forecast to cover 2023 expenses. A reminder: if you missed an offering, please add it to your next contribution...as together we are Stewards of the Gospel.

Elders/Discipleship: Brandon Marsh shared the Elders' team determined that Ushers (who had not been scheduled to

serve for several years) will be discontinued. A big part of this decision was due to our new, wonderful Greeters Team, who welcome and assist guests and regular worship attendees. Greeters provide guests with additional information, a Holy Cross brochure, and welcome gift bag. Here is another way in which you might consider helping Steward the Gospel. Please see Karen Hutton, Sherri Emedo, or Ernie Freudenburg for details.

Ruby's Pantry: Adam McClung highlighted October was a record sign-up (outside of HC) of seven new families from RCLS or surrounding schools volunteering.

Trustees: Sandy Abenstein shared updates on the following projects: AC partition in the Parish Hall, roof repair, outdoor worship area, parking lot signage, and the organization of storage spaces.

RCLS: Dan Johnson -RCLS rep reported upcoming facilities work planned includes new signage at exit/entrance, repairing a walk-in refrigerator, installing an art kiln, and procuring snow removal services.

Council Discussions: Review of 2023 Ministry Plan & Progress YTD, Sanctuary upgrades, Council members' intentions serving in 2024, and prepackaged Holy Communion elements -which will continue to be offered.

~ Jo Dean, Holy Cross Council Secretary

November Issue of Fully Alive!

Non-Profit Org.

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WORSHIP GOD



Thanksgiving Eve

Wednesday

Nov. 22

6:30 p.m.

Bring non-perishable food offering for local food shelf

During Advent

Wednesdays

Nov. 29 - Dec. 20

6:30 p.m.

SEVEN WORDS OF

Christmas

Christmas Eve

Sunday

Dec. 24

4:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

*Note: We will not gather
to worship God on
Christmas Eve morning.*