

WELCOME TO HOLY CROSS!

We are glad you could be with us today, especially if you are visiting with us for the first time. We look forward to meeting you and getting to know you. It is our hope that as you worship with us today our triune God will come to you through His Word and inspire you upwards in your life. Please stop by our Guest Welcome Center for more information. We pray that you will consider becoming a part of our Holy Cross family. **Both members & visitors please complete the connection card in the pew pockets or scan the QR code below.** You may place the card in the offering plate as it is passed later in the service.



A WORD ABOUT COMMUNION The Lord's Supper is celebrated at Holy Cross on the 1st and 3rd Sundays, and all festival Sundays. Lutherans believe that our Lord's Body and Blood are truly present "in, with and under" the bread and wine in the Supper and is given to us for the forgiveness of our sins and the strengthening of our faith. All communicants should have been baptized in the name of the Triune God and have faith in these words of Christ: "This is my Body given for you. This is my Blood shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." Instruction in this and the Lutheran Church takes place through First Communion, Confirmation, and membership classes or examination with the pastor. If you have not received instruction, contact the church office at your convenience. If you will not be receiving the Sacrament, you may remain in your pew or come forward for a blessing by crossing your arms over your chest as a sign that you will not be receiving. The common cup and individual cups are both offered. Non-alcoholic white wine is located in the center of the individual cups tray. **Gluten-free wafers are available, please request.**

SURVEY QUESTION

No survey question during Christmas.

ENTER FOR WORSHIP Upon entering the sanctuary please close the door behind you, and find a seat. After you are seated, please use this time to prepare yourself for worship.

FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED We are equipped with a personal hearing assistance system. If you would like a receiver for the service, please see an usher.

WE CAN PRAY WITH YOU If you are in need of someone to pray for you the Elders will be at the Chancel rail following the worship service.

Fourth Sunday in Advent
Rorate Coeli
December 24, 2023
Lutheran Service Book
Service of Prayer and Preaching, page 260

Rorate Coeli ~ meaning Drop down ye heavens, (dew from above, and let the clouds rain the just; let the earth be opened and bud forth a Savior)
Isaiah 45:8

Prelude Rorate Coeli

Welcome, Connection Card and Announcements

Please stand if you are able.

Opening Hymn "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee" LSB 803

- 1 Joyful, joyful we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love!
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee,
Praising Thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
Drive the gloom of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day.

- 2 All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird, and flowing fountain
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

3 Thou art giving and forgiving,
 Ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of living,
 Ocean-depth of happy rest!
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
 Fountainhead of love divine:
Joyful, we Thy heav'n inherit!
 Joyful, we by grace are Thine!

Opening Versicles

LSB page 260

P This is the day which the Lord has made;

C let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24)

P From the rising of the sun to its setting,

C the name of the Lord is to be praised. (Psalm 113:3)

P Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.

C Our God shall come; He does not keep silence.

P Prepare the way of the Lord.

C Make His paths straight.

P Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the skies rain down
righteousness.

C Let the earth open, that salvation may sprout forth.

(Psalm 50:2-3a; Isaiah 40:30; 45:8)

P From the rising of the sun to its setting,

C the name of the Lord is to be praised. (Psalm 113:3)

**C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Old Testament Canticale

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

LSB 357:6-7

6 O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight. **Refrain**

Refrain Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
And be Thyself our King of Peace. **Refrain**

Please be seated

Readings From Holy Scripture

Old Testament Reading

Deuteronomy 18:15–19

¹⁵“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— ¹⁶just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ ¹⁷And the Lord said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. ¹⁸I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.’”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle

Philippians 4:4-7

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand if you are able.

Holy Gospel

John 1:19-28

D The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the first chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹⁹This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." ²²So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." ²⁴(Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) ²⁵They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ²⁷even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." ²⁸These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

D This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

CATECHISM (Pastor will do this)

Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2-17)

LSB page 264

- C** You shall have no other gods.
You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
Honor your father and your mother.
You shall not murder.
You shall not commit adultery.
You shall not steal.
You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
You shall not covet your neighbor's house.
You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or
maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs
to your neighbor.

Apostles' Creed

- C** I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

C Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Please be seated.

Hymn of the Day "Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding" LSB 345

- 1 Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding!
"Christ is near," we hear it say.
"Cast away the works of darkness,
All you children of the day!"
- 2 Startled at the solemn warning,
Let the earthbound soul arise;
Christ, its sun, all sloth dispelling,
Shines upon the morning skies.
- 3 See, the Lamb, so long expected,
Comes with pardon down from heav'n.
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow,
One and all, to be forgiv'n;
- 4 So, when next He comes in glory
And the world is wrapped in fear,
He will shield us with His mercy
And with words of love draw near.

D5 Honor, glory, might, dominion
To the Father and the Son
With the ever-living Spirit
While eternal ages run!

Sermon

Please stand if you are able.

Offertory Prayer

Prayer

LSB page 265

P In peace let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the gift of divine peace and of pardon, with all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the holy Christian Church, here and scattered throughout the world, and for the proclamation of the Gospel and the calling of all to faith, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For this nation, for our cities and communities, and for the common welfare of us all, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For seasonable weather and for the fruitfulness of the earth, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For those who labor, for those whose work is difficult or dangerous, and for all who travel, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For all those in need, for the hungry and homeless, for the widowed and orphaned, and for all those in prison, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the sick and dying and for all those who care for them, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For . . . [additional bids for prayer may be inserted here]. . . let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Collect of the Day

P Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Collect for Peace

LSB page 251

P O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Morning Prayer

LSB page 266

C I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and

all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

New Testament Canticle “Magnificat”

My soul proclaims Your greatness,
O God, and my spirit rejoices in You.
You have looked with love on Your servant here,
And blessed me all my life through.

Great and mighty are You,
O Holy One, strong is Your kindness evermore.
How you favor the weak and lowly one,
humbling the proud of heart!

You have cast the mighty down from their thrones,
and uplifted the humble of heart.
You have filled the hungry with wondrous things,
and left the wealthy no part.

Great and mighty are You, O Faithful One,
strong is Your justice, strong Your love,
as You promised to Sarah and Abraham,
kindness forevermore.

My soul proclaims Your greatness, O God,
and my spirit rejoices in You.
You have looked with love on Your servant here,
And blessed me all my life through.

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Blessing (from Psalm 103:1)

LSB page 267

P Let us bless the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

P The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the † Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you.

C **Amen.**

Closing Hymn “We Light the Advent Candle”

Verse 1

We light the Advent candle
And wait for Christ to come.
With hope, we trust the promise
That He will bring us home.
Our hope is in our Savior
Who wins for us God’s favor.
We wait with growing light
Till God makes all things right!

Verse 2

We light the Advent candle
And thank the Lord for rest.
With peace, we know our Jesus
Has come to be our guest.
This peace beyond all knowing
Within our hearts is glowing.
We wait with growing light
Till God makes all things right!

Verse 3

We light the Advent candle
And sing with cheerful heart.
With joy, we spread the message—
A blessing to impart.
Our joy is never ending;
The Son to us is sending.
We wait with growing light
Till God makes all things right!

Verse 4

We light the Advent candle
And share the wondrous Word.
With love, we tell of Jesus
Till all around have heard.
God's love is for each nation
Throughout His whole creation.
We wait with growing light
Till God makes all things right!

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THE SUNDAY HERALD

December 23 & 24, 2023

MONDAY OFFICE IS CLOSED	FRIDAY OFFICE IS CLOSED
TUESDAY OFFICE IS CLOSED	SATURDAY Worship 5:30pm
WEDNESDAY OFFICE IS CLOSED	SUNDAY Communion Worship 10:00am Voters' Assembly 11:15am Family Friendly New Year's Eve Party 8:00pm
THURSDAY OFFICE IS CLOSED	

BIBLE READINGS FOR THE EVE OF THE CIRC. & NAME OF JESUS

Old Testament Reading: Numbers 13:16-17a

Epistle: Romans 4:1-6,11-12, 22-25

Holy Gospel: Matthew 1:20-22

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Our **Christmas Eve** candle-light communion worship services are at **4:00 and 7:00 pm**. **Christmas Day** communion worship service at **9:00 am**. **Saturday, December 30, 2023**, worship at **5:30 pm**, no Bible Class. **Sunday, December 31, 2023**, communion worship at **10:00 am** no Bible Class.

VOTERS' MEETING

The date of our annual voters' meeting is Sunday, December 31 after the worship service. On the agenda is the election of the 2024 Church Council Officers and the approval of the 2024 Budget. Please make every effort to attend this very important meeting.

OFFICE CLOSED

The office will be closed from Friday, December 22, 2023, through Monday, January 1, 2024. If you have an emergency, please contact your Elder. You can also leave a message. Someone will be checking the messages. Thank you!

FAMILY FRIENDLY NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

Join us 12/31 from 8PM-12:30AM to ring in 2024! Holy Cross will be hosting a family friendly party that will be fun for all ages. There will be food and games in Haggerty Hall, an open game room in the basement, then meet with us in the Sanctuary at 12:00am for a moment of silence and prayers for the New Year! Bring snack food to share (pizza and drinks will be provided) as well as family and friends to enjoy an evening of fun and fellowship! Please sign up in the Narthex. If you have any questions, see Pastor or Laurel Clemons.

NEW HOPE FOOD PANTRY

The Food Pantry is in need of the following items: non-perishable food and hygiene items. Thank you!

2023 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

Please fill out the GREEN paper in your bulletin if you want your contribution statement sent to you electronically (via email). We need this form filled out every year just to make sure that there have been no changes. By switching to email delivery, you can receive your statement more quickly and we can save postage costs for the church. If you have any questions, please contact Denise Vandenberghe or the church office. This is a good time to give us any updates on your phone number and/or address. Thank you!

2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES

The 2024 offering envelopes are available for pick-up by the church mailboxes. Please do not begin using these until January 1, 2024. Do not use the Lutheran Witness envelope found in your offering envelope box. In order to conserve money, we did not issue envelopes to members that have not contributed the last 2 years. If you did not receive envelopes and would like them, please contact the church office.

BLESSED CHRISTMAS!

But the angel said to them. "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord". Luke 2:10-11

**Wishing you that
CHRISTMAS JOY!**

Pastor Eric, Michael and Becky.