

Holy Cross
Herald
December 2023

Aiming
our lives toward
Christ!

Proclaiming
Christ crucified!

Reclaiming
lost lives for Christ!

**"For unto us a child is born,
unto us a son is given..." Isaiah 9:6**

Christmas is all about a child, The Child. God came to us, incarnated through all the stages of precious life in the womb. It is a sacred place. The LCMS recognized service organization (RSO) Lutherans for Life have developed "*Life Thoughts in the Church Year*" designed to help congregations see the church year through the lens of the sanctity of human life. *Life Thoughts* are based on the appointed readings from *Lutheran Service Book*. Add this to your devotions over Advent and Christmas.

Advent I – "The Lord is our righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:6b). What comforting truth for hearts troubled with sin's guilt that keeps resurfacing. Sometimes a past sin can be so haunting that we do not always feel forgiven, or we cannot forgive ourselves. The sin of abortion is a prime example. But our righteousness does not depend upon us or our feelings. Our righteousness is Christ! *Prayer: O Lord our Righteousness, may my comfort and hope be anchored in You and not my feelings. Amen.*

Advent II – No matter what sufferings we carry or how weary we become, Jesus provides hope-filled news about His second coming. Christ has won the victory, and when He returns death and evil will be vanquished. We will be “leaping like calves from the stall” (Malachi 4:1-3). “Straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:28). Some things are worth waiting for—even amid suffering!

Advent III – “Speak tenderly” in Isaiah 40:1-2 is literally “speak to the heart.” More than nice-sounding words, all of the Good News encapsulated in the first and second coming of Jesus speaks powerfully to those with struggling and burdened hearts. The life issues give us opportunity to speak this Good News to matters of the heart, especially those considered “controversial” and “divisive.” *Prayer: Thank You for touching our hearts with the Good News! Help us share it with all who deal with matters of the heart. Amen.*

Advent IV/Christmas Eve – Jesus brought God delicately amidst sinners, as humble in crucifixion as He was helpless in conception. Yet this estate did not hinder but, in fact, heralded the full realm and reign of God for us. And thereby He reaffirmed the worth of even the feeblest human beings. God’s gift of life arrives all the better for the plain packaging He habitually hides it behind. *Prayer: Lamb of God, make it so that our taking hold of You leads us to cradle Your little ones as well. Amen.*

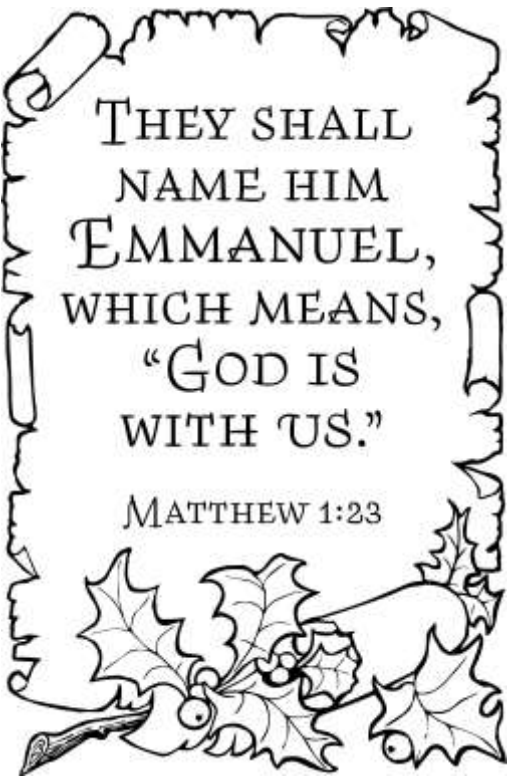
Christmas I/New Year’s Eve – A peaceful departure (Luke 2:29) may not always mean the absence of pain and suffering. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, it is seeing the presence of our Savior accomplishing His will according to His timetable. *Prayer: In our last hour, dear Savior, help us see You and be at peace. Amen.*

Holy Cross will be celebrating the 4th Sunday in Advent on December 24th at 10:00 am. Come back to celebrate our greatest Christmas gift, the birth of Jesus. Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Services are at 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm with communion offered at both of the services. Hear the rest of the story on Christmas Day at 9:00 am, this is also a communion service.



THEY SHALL
NAME HIM
EMMANUEL,
WHICH MEANS,
"GOD IS
WITH US."

MATTHEW 1:23



His Christmas Presence

At this time of the year, I say, "Merry Christmas." Because I prefer that to "Happy Holidays," but I don't get confrontational about it. Instead, I want to be gracious. After all, Christmas isn't always a happy time for everyone. For someone who has lost their job, this is not the most wonderful time of the year, because so much emphasis is placed on a Merry Christmas being a materialistic one.

There are also those who have lost loved ones. I am one of those people, and things that once made me happy at this time of year now make me sad. Those things that once brought happiness are now things that bring sadness, because they bring memories of times we spent together. Therefore, Christmas becomes a difficult time for some.

There are many who are in need of encouragement at this time of year. They don't need a Christmas present; what they really need is **HIS** Christmas presence. They need to be reminded of what this season is all about. It is not about things. It is not about presents.

Please don't get me wrong, These things have their place, but we need to remember the essential message of Christmas, which is "***Immanuel***" God is with us. And for the hurting person, the lonely person, the sorrowful person, this is the time of year to bring the gift of encouragement to them and say, "The message of Christmas is: God is with you. God will help you. God will strengthen you. God loves you"

So, I challenge you.... look for opportunities to share the love of God during this season, because it is a time when we seem to be more open to engaging in conversation with others. Now is a great opportunity for you to bring encouragement to someone who is struggling. Someone who is hurting. Someone who needs to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. Who needs your encouragement today? Go and share this good news.

Merry and Blessed Christmas to you.

Deacon Larry



CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES

Merry Christmas! December is here and we are looking forward to a month of fun things that are happening! We invite you and your family to join us in our month of celebration!

Sunday School and Youth Bible Study

Sunday Mornings from 9:00 am—9:45 am



Sunday December 3rd: St. Nicholas Sunday

We will celebrate with a pancake breakfast and the story of St. Nicholas



Sunday December 17th: Jesus' Birthday

We will celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus! We will decorate cupcakes and enjoy a game or two.

Toy Drive: Just a reminder that we will be collecting **UNWRAPPED** toys for our Gifts For All God's Children until Sunday December 10th. Gifts will then be taken Monday December 11th to the GFAGC office where they will be distributed to families in need. There is a box outside the Sunday School office to put donations.



| | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Pastor Eric | 12/3 |
| Lynn Pastoria | 12/4 |
| Bentley Wojciechowski | 12/5 |
| Sue Marchionda | 12/6 |
| JoAnn Hutchens | 12/7 |
| Joanne Vollbrecht | 12/7 |
| Gary Rinko | 12/14 |
| Ashley Vandenberghe | 12/16 |
| Brennan LeMieux-Hill | 12/18 |
| Jacob Llewellyn | 12/18 |
| Marie Richter | 12/19 |
| Sheryl Haase | 12/19 |
| Ralph Klumpp | 12/20 |
| Reece Hintze | 12/23 |
| Carol Dehnke | 12/24 |
| Amy Schwartz | 12/28 |
| Michelle Hoeft | 12/29 |
| Amy Breckenridge | 12/31 |
| Kristina Dehnke | 12/31 |
| Brianna Prewitt | 12/31 |



Aaron & Laurel Clemens
 December 12, 2009 14 years

Our Members in care facilities and/or shut-in



Barb Ugo
 Shirley Pontious
 Donna Marshall
 Lotte Weber
 Linda Troppman
 Harry Roberts
 Dolly Ferries
 Barb Rohde
 Shirley Handy

Jane Bennett
 Paul Meyerand
 Siegfried Tyburski
 Shirley Tallman
 Barbara Unger
 Donna Kaip
 Jim Cantwell
 Vern & Ruth Parker

**EASY WAY TO INVITE FRIENDS
&
NEIGHBORS TO CHURCH FOR
ADVENT & CHRISTMAS!**

Yard signs are available for you to use now! These signs are an excellent (and easy!) way to invite your neighbors and everyone who drives by your house. Pick up your sign at the Welcome Center or at either door.

Make Christmas meaningful this year!

**GLORY
TO
GOD
IN THE
HIGHEST!**



Join the Holy Cross Lutheran Church family for services Wednesday evenings (7 PM), Christmas Eve (4 PM or 7 PM) or Christmas Day (9 AM)!
30003 Ryan Rd (12 ½ and Ryan Rd)



Sunday, December 31, 2023 at 10:00 am,
Holy Cross is having a New Year's Eve
Communion Worship Service. We will be
celebrating the Circumcision and the
Naming of Jesus.

FAMILY FRIENDLY NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

Join us December 31st from 8:00 pm to 12:30 am 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 12:00 am for a moment of silence and prayers for the New Year! Bring a snack food to share (pizza and drinks will be provided) as well as family and friends to enjoy in an evening of fun and fellowship! Please sign up in the Narthex. If you have any questions see Pastor Eric or Laurel Clemons.



Christmas Baskets



New Hope Food Pantry

For the month of October, we served 40 families, 118 people. We gave 1 Bible. Please note: some forms arrived late and there are more served than is reported here and will be reflected in next month's report. The year-to-date totals are 361 families, 1251 people, 365 units, 53 Bibles and 40 packages of diapers.

We have been having an increase in clients and are very happy to welcome three new volunteers to our group. They are a huge help packing bags of groceries to keep the shelves stocked and ready.

At the time of this writing Thanksgiving will be over and we will be preparing to give out baskets for Christmas. We will probably give 40 baskets. The baskets will each contain a turkey and the same items as Thanksgiving baskets, except we will not give out pies. Instead, we will give Christmas cookies and maybe candy. We are very busy shopping for items for the baskets. We could use donations of any non-perishable food items.

Please remember to contact Joanne Vollbrecht as soon as possible if you or someone you know can use a holiday basket. She is putting a list together to mail out invitations. Once again, you may give the basket unanimously. Please contact David Difatta if you are able to help set up a few tables and chairs. We also need help filling the baskets on Friday December 15th at 7:00 pm. Children are appreciated as helpers. We also need some men or even women to load the Christmas baskets into cars on Saturday morning December 16th at 10:00 am. Some of our clients have no transportation, If anyone would like to make a delivery or two, that would be very helpful.

When our clients come into the building, they will have an invitation that was sent to them. We need a few helpers to greet the clients and take their form. This is very easy to do. Many have done this in the past. Please call June Moore if you can be available to help in this area. New Hope Food Pantry wishes to thank everyone who has helped us in the past and will be there for us during this years Christmas distribution.

Just to let everyone know, the sign-up sheets for flowers will be on the bulletin board on the right side when you come in the back door. Remember if you sign-up for flower donations you can take the bouquet home after the Sunday service. Thank you, Sharron & Sandi

Altar
Flowers

Holy Cross Women's Ministries
Lutheran Women in Mission (LWML)
Mission Grant Spotlight

Gifts for All God's Children = \$25,000

Gifts For All God's Children (GFAGC) was established in 1987 with a mission to meet needs and share the love of Christ with at-risk children in southeast Michigan. Over 74,000 children have been served through partnerships with over 100 churches and organizations. The grant of \$25,000 will enable Gifts for All God's Children's programming to **expand to five additional church sites** with the City of Detroit and to serve more at-risk children and families, while teaching the Gospel message in a loving and supportive environment. These congregations will be equipped with resources to help engage children and families to meet basic needs, engage in Christian fellowship and learning activities, provide opportunities to hear the Gospel message and become a disciple of Christ, and help these churches become more sustainable assets to the community. We ask you to continue to donate to your LWML mite box to support this Mission grant.

Sponsoring congregations, business donors and hundreds of individuals provide gifts to the children at Christmas and Easter. We here at Holy Cross are one of the individual congregations whose Sunday School children are now collecting toys to donate to GFAGC this Christmas. Please help our kids by donating a gift and putting it in the Sunday School box for them to give to Gifts for All God's Children.

God has blessed us to be a blessing to others. Thank you, Holy Cross, for your continued support of our LWML Mission Grants.

FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER

IN MEMORY OF ELLIE TACKE

For the General Fund

Bonnie Esch

THANK OFFERING FOR PRAYER SUPPORT

For the General Fund

Cathy Johnson

Memorial Gifts





*Holy Cross Lutheran Church
Voters' Meeting*

VOTERS' MEETING

Join us for our Voters' Meeting on December 31, 2023 after the worship service. On the agenda is the election of the 2024 Church Council Officers and the approval of the 2024 Budget. Copies of the 2024 proposed budget will be available on the Welcome Center in the narthex by the 17th. Please make every effort to attend this very important meeting.

The Nominating Committee presents to the Holy Cross congregation the names of the candidates for serving as Congregation Officers:

2024 CHURCH COUNCIL—OFFICER NOMINEES.

Nominee for President

Mark Coon

Nominee for Council Secretary

Steve Northcott

Nominee for Vice-President

Graddie Hall

Nominee for Treasurer

TBD

Nominee for Financial Secretary

Denise Vandenberghe

As you can see, at the time of this publishing we have 1 open role on council. We are actively seeking an individual to fill the spot. We ask you to pray that God will move the heart of who He wants to fill the position. Everything we ask in prayer our Lord will grant according to His will. This is promised to us in the scriptures (Mark 11:24 & others). Prayerfully we will have the TBD filled by the December 31st Voters Assembly. We will see you then, Gods Blessings, Church Council.

The office will be closed on the following days in honor of the holidays.

**Friday, December 22 thru
Monday, January 1**

If you have an emergency, please contact your Elder. You can also leave a phone message at the church office. We will be checking our messages. Thank you!



HAVE A BLESSED CHRISTMAS SEASON!!

Holy Cross Lutheran Church
30003 Ryan Road
Warren, MI 48092

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Warren, MI
Permit No. 154



Wishing you a Blessed Christmas and Very Happy New Year!



CHURCH OFFICE
586-751-2550
office@holycrosswarren.com

NEW HOPE
FOOD PANTRY
586-751-2517

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP!

Saturday - 5:30 pm
Sunday - 10:00 am

BIBLE STUDY CLASSES

Saturday - 4:30 pm
Sunday - 9:00 am for all Adult, Youth
& Sunday School for Children