

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 on your way out.

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 instructions, 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 Advent.

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.

**Third Sunday in Advent
(Gaudete)
December 17, 2023
Lutheran Service Book, Divine 4, page 203**

Gaudete ~ meaning Rejoice, (rejoice Christ is born)

Prelude

**Welcome, Connection Card/Survey Announcements and
Sharing of the Peace**

Please stand if you are able.

Opening Hymn

“Prepare the Royal Highway”

LSB 343

1 Prepare the royal highway;
The King of kings is near!
Let ev’ry hill and valley
A level road appear!
Then greet the King of Glory
Foretold in sacred story: **Refrain**

Refrain Hosanna to the Lord,
For He fulfills God’s Word!

2 God’s people, see Him coming:
Your own eternal king!
Palm branches strew before Him!
Spread garments! Shout and sing!
God’s promise will not fail you!
No more shall doubt assail you! **Refrain**

3 Then fling the gates wide open
To greet your promised king!
Your king, yet ev'ry nation
Its tribute too should bring.
All lands, bow down before Him!
All nations, now adore Him! **Refrain**

Refrain Hosanna to the Lord,
For He fulfill's God's Word!

4 His is no earthly kingdom;
It comes from heav'n above.
His rule is peace and freedom
And justice, truth, and love.
So let your praise be sounding
For kindness so abounding: **Refrain**

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CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,
C **who made heaven and earth.**

P If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?
C **But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.**

P Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

Kneel if you are able.

Take a moment to confess in your heart what is on your mind.

C Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

SERVICE OF THE WORD

Introit

Psalm 85:1-2, 6, 8

P Rejoice in the Lord always;
again I will say, Rejoice.

**C Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.
The Lord is at hand.**

P Lord, you were favorable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

**C You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you covered all their sin.**

P Will you not revive us again,
that your people may rejoice in you?

**C Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints; but let them
not turn back to folly.**

**ALL 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.**



C Lord, have mer - cy; Christ, have mer - cy; Lord, have mer - cy.

Salutation and Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Please be seated.

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 40:1–11

¹Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." ⁶A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. ⁹Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" ¹⁰Behold, the Lord GOD comes

with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

D This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Anthem "Away in A Manger" Verses 1 & 2 Sunday School Children
All Verse 3

**3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.**

Epistle 1 Corinthians 4:1–5

¹This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ²Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. ³But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. ⁴I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. ⁵Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

D This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Please stand if you are able.

Alleluia and Verse

LSB page 205



Alleluia and Verse musical score. It consists of four staves of music in G major, 3/4 time. The first staff is the Alleluia chorus: 'Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.' The second staff is the verse: 'These things are writ - ten that you may be - lieve that'. The third staff continues the verse: 'Je - sus is the Christ, the Son of God.' The fourth staff is the final Alleluia chorus: 'Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.'

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

These things are writ - ten that you may be - lieve that

Je - sus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 11:2–11

- D The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the eleventh chapter.
C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

²When John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” ⁴And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. ⁶And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is he of whom it is written,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.”

¹¹Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

D This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

Nicene Creed

LSB page 206

C **I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.**

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Please be seated.

Hymn of the Day

“On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”

LSB 344

- 1 On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake and hearken, for he brings
Glad tidings of the King of kings!
- 2 Then cleansed be ev’ry life from sin;
Make straight the way for God within,
And let us all our hearts prepare
For Christ to come and enter there.
- 3 We hail Thee as our Savior, Lord,
Our refuge and our great reward;
Without Thy grace we waste away
Like flow’rs that wither and decay.
- 4 Lay on the sick Thy healing hand
And make the fallen strong to stand;
Show us the glory of Thy face
Till beauty springs in ev’ry place.
- 5 All praise, eternal Son, to Thee
Whose advent sets Thy people free,
Whom with the Father we adore
And Holy Spirit evermore.

Sermon**Offertory**

“Hark the Glad Sound”

LSB 349:1,4

- 1 Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,
The Savior promised long;
Let ev’ry heart prepare a throne
And ev’ry voice a song.

- 4 Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim,
And heav'n's eternal arches ring
With Thy belovèd name.

Please stand if you are able.

Prayer of the Church

P In peace, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**

P That the Lord who is favorable to His people would restore the fortunes of His Church by the coming of Christ Jesus; that He would fill us with rejoicing at all times and give reasonableness to our words and deeds; and that all may recognize our Christian confidence in His Son's advent, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For the Church, the Bride of Christ, that proclaiming the Good News of forgiveness in her Savior may always be her joy and delight, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For the children of our families, that every darkness would be lightened by Christ's gracious visitation; and that God would preserve them from dangers to body and soul, guide them by His Word in wise paths, and keep them firm in the faith until life's end, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For our President, Congress, Senators, justices, our governor; and all others in positions of civil authority, that they may diligently administer their duties in all godly wisdom, justice, compassion and contentment for the well-being of our nation, let us pray to the Lord:
C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For the sick and suffering, [and especially for _____,] that the One who gives sight to the blind, heals the lame, cleanses the lepers, gives hearing to the deaf, raises the dead and preaches Good News to the poor may sustain them in their trials and grant healing in accord with His perfect will, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P Lord God, heavenly Father, You gave Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to become man that He might enter this world and destroy the works of the devil. Deliver us from sin and death, and give us everlasting life. We implore You to rule and govern our hearts by Your Holy Spirit, that we would seek no refuge but His Word, that we would avoid the sin to which our sinful flesh is inclined, and that we would remain among the faithful followers of Christ, in whom we obtain eternal salvation; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

Preface

LSB page 208

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

P It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into death that we might not die eternally.

Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:

Sanctus

1. O holy, holy, Lord, our God! For us and our salvation,
From heav'n above the Son is born Within His own creation.
Hosanna, blest is He Who comes, is born for you, for me.
Eternal King, He comes, To us salvation bringing.

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Prayer of Thanksgiving

LSB page 209

- P Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

In Your righteous judgment You condemned the sin of Adam and Eve, who ate the forbidden fruit, and You justly barred them and all their children from the tree of life. Yet, in Your great mercy, You promised salvation by a second Adam, Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and made His cross a life-giving tree for all who trust in Him.

We give You thanks for the redemption You have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may faithfully eat and drink of the fruits of His cross and receive the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation that come to us in His body and blood.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

Lord's Prayer

(from 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.

The Words of Our Lord

(From Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25)

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My † body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

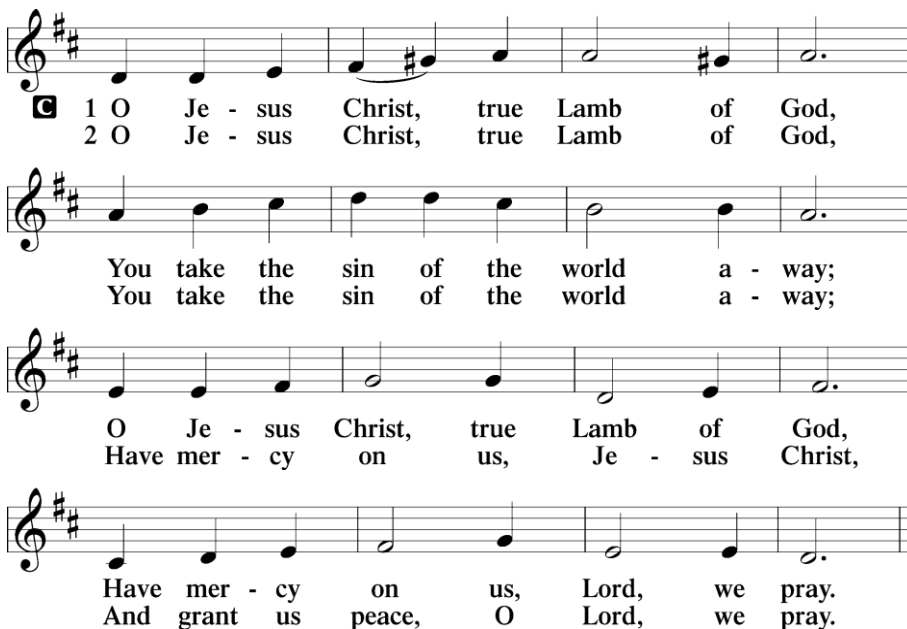
In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My † blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Pax Domini

(from John 20:19)

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.



G 1 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
 2 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
 You take the sin of the world a - way;
 You take the sin of the world a - way;
 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
 Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus Christ,
 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, we pray.
 And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

Please be seated.

Distribution Hymn

“Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”

LSB 341

- 1 Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates!
 Behold, the King of glory waits.
 The King of kings is drawing near;
 The Savior of the world is here.
 Life and salvation He doth bring;
 Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.
 To God the Father raise
 Your joyful songs of praise.

- 2 A righteous Helper comes to thee;
His chariot is humility,
His kingly crown is holiness,
His scepter, pity in distress.
The end of all our woe He brings;
Therefore the earth is glad and sings.
To Christ the Savior raise
Your grateful hymns of praise.
- 3 How blest the land, the city blest,
Where Christ the ruler is confessed!
O peaceful hearts and happy homes
To whom this King in triumph comes!
The cloudless sun of joy is He
Who comes to set His people free.
To God the Spirit raise
Your happy shouts of praise.
- 4 Fling wide the portals of your heart;
Make it a temple set apart
From earthly use for heav'n's employ,
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.
So shall your Sov'reign enter in
And new and nobler life begin.
To God alone be praise
For word and deed and grace!
- 5 Redeemer, come and open wide
My heart to Thee; here, Lord, abide!
O enter with Thy grace divine;
Thy face of mercy on me shine.
Thy Holy Spirit guide us on
Until our glorious goal is won.
Eternal praise and fame
We offer to Thy name.

- 1 Praise the One who breaks the darkness
With a liberating light;
Praise the One who frees the pris'ners,
Turning blindness into sight.
Praise the One who preached the Gospel,
Healing ev'ry dread disease,
Calming storms, and feeding thousands
With the very Bread of peace.
- 2 Praise the One who blessed the children
With a strong, yet gentle, word;
Praise the One who drove out demons
With the piercing, two-edged sword.
Praise the One who brings cool water
To the desert's burning sand;
From this Well comes living water,
Quenching thirst in ev'ry land.
- 3 Let us praise the Word Incarnate,
Christ, who suffered in our place.
Jesus died and rose victorious
That we may know God by grace.
Let us sing for joy and gladness,
Seeing what our God has done;
Let us praise the true Redeemer,
Praise the One who makes us one.

Text: Rusty Edwards, 1955

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Please stand if you are able.

Nunc Dimittis

(from Luke 2:29-32)

LSB page 211

C 1 O Lord, now let Your ser - vant De -
2 All glo - ry to the Fa - ther, All
part in heav'n - ly peace, For I have seen the
glo - ry to the Son, All glo - ry to the
glo - ry Of Your re - deem - ing grace:
Spir - it, For - ev - er Three in One;
A light to lead the Gen - tiles Un -
For as in the be - gin - ning, Is
to Your ho - ly hill, The glo - ry of Your
now, shall ev - er be, God's tri - une name re -
peo - ple, Your cho - sen Is - ra - el.
sound - ing Through all e - ter - ni - ty.

Post-Communion Collect

LSB page 212

P Let us pray. We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Benedicamus

(from Psalm 103:1)

P Let us bless the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Benediction

(from Numbers 6:24-26)

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and † give you His peace.

C **Amen.**

Closing Hymn

“In This Advent”

1 In this Advent, brothers, sisters,
Let us pause and so prepare
That we may greet Christ, our Savior,
Here in worship and in prayer.
He came once, fulfilling promise,
And He shall come back again.
Daily comes He, Word Incarnate,
In our hearts and minds to reign.

2 Brethren, heed the gracious warning
Of the day of Christ's return.
Stay awake and watchful ever,
For His advent to discern.
Keep yourself alert and ready;
Without notice shall He come
Then to usher all the faithful
Into His eternal home.

- 3 Brethren, look up, hope in Jesus;
All His promises are sure.
Bear the fruit that fits repentance;
Live in love and so endure.
With baptismal joy and power,
Straighten paths, your head upraise.
Hope in Him each day and ever,
With one voice to sing His praise.
- 4 Joyfully, O faithful brethren,
Look and see what God has done.
When He walked this earth of mis'ry,
Christ turned darkness into light.
Many blind, lame, deaf, and leprous
Had their lives changed suddenly.
On the Last Day shall creation
Be renewed eternally.

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Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting Four from Lutheran Service Book
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THE SUNDAY HERALD

December 16 & 17, 2023

MONDAY		FRIDAY	
TUESDAY		OFFICE IS CLOSED	
WEDNESDAY		SATURDAY	
THURSDAY		Lessons & Carols	
Bulletin Assembly	1:00pm	Christmas Service	5:30pm
Prayer Group	3:00pm	SUNDAY	
Bells	6:30pm	Worship	10:00am
Choir	7:30pm	Christmas Eve	
		Communion Worship	4:00 & 7:00pm

BIBLE READINGS FOR THE 4TH WEEKEND IN ADVENT

Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 18:15-19

Epistle: Philippians 4:4-7

Holy Gospel: John 1:19-28

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE

There will be a worship service on Sunday, **December 24th at 10:00 am**, celebrating the 4th Sunday in Advent. There will be no Bible Class. 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.

NEW HOPE FOOD PANTRY

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

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!

ALTAR FLOWERS

Just to let everyone know, the sign-up sheets for flowers will be on the HCLC bulletin board on the right side when you come in the back door. The cost is \$20.00 for each bouquet, you can buy 1 or both. When you purchase a bouquet, you can take it home after the Sunday service. Thank you, Sharron & Sandi

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.

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!

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

A copy of the December Newsletter is available on the Welcome Center table and on the Website. Thank you.