



HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

A Member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Pastor: Reverend Patricia Hughes

August 25, 2020

Dear members of Holy Cross and friends,

As Pastor Patricia embarks on her grandkid adventure you are blessed (or cursed as it may seem) to have church leaders writing the cover letter for the email blast this week and next.

We, as leaders of your congregation, have been discussing the pandemic and how it has and continues to affect our congregation. The good news is that we are doing okay financially. Continuing contributions, lower expenses and a forgivable Payroll Protection Loan have offset our loss in rental revenue. The bad news is that our outreach has suffered. Most of our avenues of outreach have been shut down or seriously curtailed by Covid-19.

I believe that God has the power to work wonders through adverse situations. As we've examined in our Thursday Bible studies: Joseph was sold into slavery but later saved Israel during the 7 year famine. The Pharaoh ordered all the Israelite male children be throw into the Nile, but Moses survived to lead his people out. Jacob had to flee to Egypt to save the baby Jesus so that he could save us all.

The Pandemic has definitely created many adverse situations, but out of adversity new opportunities for outreach arise. I don't believe that the fire of our desire to be of service to our neighborhood and community has gone out. Like sleeping hot coals, we are just waiting for the right wind to blow our fire back to life. What is that wind for Holy Cross? Several of us attended a Zoom meeting sponsored by Salem-Keizer Youth Collaborative that is asking churches and other organizations to help kids with online studies and activities that align with the virtual classrooms. We are helping one homeless family with our rental house. Is there a way to help more? There is a need for learning pods to assist students on the days they are not in class. Is there a way we can help with marginalized populations that may have a hard time learning on line such as our homeless population or those whose primary language is not English.

We can't let our outreach fire go out! Your leaders are looking into opportunities to rekindle the flame and welcome your input and participation. Please share your enthusiasm and ideas with us and each other. God has a purpose for Holy Cross in this adverse situation. Let's find it.

Loran Sell, Vice President.

Sermon for August 23, 2020 – Pastor Patricia Hughes This summer, our worship services and sermons have focused on the Old Testament, as it parallels our own lives today – both are about a search for significance. I've enjoyed these accounts of Abraham Isaac, Jacob and Joseph as they struggle for their family, and their nation, to survive, though they endure hardship, childless years, family rivalry and infighting, and slavery. Their continued clinging to a God who loves them, cares for them, and prepares better choices for them sounds really important to me at this moment in time. We live in uncertain times. 7 months ago I certainly never dreamed to be talking to you about nearly 200,000 americans dead from a disease we had not heard of yet. Our story in this time is about a struggle to survive, about a search for meaning, about a definitive course correction in the life of the church, in the life of each of us here gathered.

And now we turn to the account of Moses, the deliverer. Because the people need a deliverer. They have lived in Egypt, depending on when you start counting at least 230 years – saved from famine by the move to Egypt – a providential move based on the brothers' underhanded behavior, but reclaimed by God's love in action. And the narrative changes tone – now the family of Israel is not just in trouble from each other, or their choices, now the family is openly distrusted and marked for removal by the powers that be. Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. Of course he didn't know him because of the passage of time, but he didn't KNOW him – had no awareness of the great good that the Jews – immigrants to Egypt in a time of famine – had done in the intervening years. Exodus 1:7 says they were mighty, or strong, or exceedingly numerous depending on your translation from the Hebrew. But of course it is their strength that is the problem, especially if it comes from their numbers. They are a threat to the pharaoh who does not know Joseph. All he sees is enough men for an army. And so, this powerful leader begins to sow discontent among the Egyptians with the immigrant Hebrew people, because he is frightened by them. And everything that happens from this point forward can be said to flow from the fear of this weak ruler. And the discontent he sows.

On the other side of the ledger (some of you remember I was an accountant before seminary) we see the Hebrew people, and their strength is spoken to us in the lives of these women mentioned – first, the midwives who don't do what the pharaoh wants, to put babies to death at birth. Frustrated, the pharaoh instead orders the direct killing of baby boys. But the next women to take brave action are Moses' mother Jochebed who places her child in a basket – the Hebrew word is actually ark – yep just like Noah – and sets him adrift. When he is found by the Pharaoh's daughter, it is his sister Miriam who is conveniently there – asking if Pharaoh's daughter will need a nurse (someone to breastfeed) the baby, and of course, the mother is the perfect one. And so the stage is set for the Hebrew people to take center stage again in the great story, as their deliverer, Moses enters the account.

As we search for significance in days when we can go days without encountering another human being, due to the isolation necessary to slow the pandemic, can we find strength, can we find inspiration for dealing with change, loss and uncertainty? My prayer is for you each to be as brave as the Hebrew midwives who managed to disobey the direct order of pharaoh by simply sidestepping the issue – Hebrew women are so strong, the baby is born before we get there! My prayer is for each of you to sacrifice your own needs for your children and loved ones – like Jochebed who risked everything by setting Moses in his little ark. My prayer is for each of you to be as resourceful as Miriam, watching over her little brother and speaking up for her mother when needed. And of course, my prayer is for you each to be like Pharaoh's daughter – not even a Hebrew, but willing to step up to care for someone in need when the opportunity arises – and not just someone, a helpless someone, who her own father has marked for death. In these days of loss and isolation, I commend to each of you to be like the Hebrews, mighty, and strong, as you face new decisions, new choices, and new opportunities. God is with you. Just as God was with each of these I mentioned today. God will give you strength, peace, bravery and more, when you need it. Your significance is based on God's love, and through that love, to care for, cherish and do what you can for the least of these. Amen.

WORSHIPPING AT HOME WITH HOLY CROSS
SUNDAY, AUGUST 30, 2020 – THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
whose steadfast love is everlasting,
whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation.

Amen.

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Reconciling God,

**we confess that we do not trust your abundance,
and we deny your presence in our lives.**

**We place our hope in ourselves
and rely on our own efforts.**

We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.

We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.

**We fear difference and do not welcome others
as you have welcomed us.**

We sin in thought, word, and deed.

By your grace, forgive us;

through your love, renew us;

and in your Spirit, lead us;

so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.

Beloved of God,

by the radical abundance of divine mercy

we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus,

through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.

Our sins are forgiven.

Let us live now in hope.

For hope does not disappoint,

because God's love has been poured into our hearts

through the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN – O Jesus, I Have Promised ELW 810

1 O Jesus, I have promised
to serve you to the end;
remain forever near me,
my master and my friend.
I shall not fear the battle
if you are by my side,
nor wander from the pathway

if you will be my guide.

- 2 Oh, let me feel you near me;
the world is ever near.
I see the sights that dazzle,
the tempting sounds I hear.
My foes are ever near me,
around me and within;
but, Jesus, then draw nearer
to shield my soul from sin.
- 3 O Jesus, you have promised
to all who follow you
that where you are in glory
your servant shall be too.
And Jesus, I have promised
to serve you to the end;
oh, give me grace to follow,
my master and my friend.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

READINGS AND PSALM

Exodus 3:1-15

From the blazing bush God calls Moses

Psalms 26:1-8

Your love is before my eyes; I have walked faithfully with you. (Ps. 26:3)

Romans 12:9-21

Live in harmony

Matthew 16:21-28

The passion prediction and rebuke to Peter

APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.***

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (see attached prayers)

OFFERING PRAYER

God of goodness and growth,
all creation is yours,
and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.
Water and word, wine and bread:
these are signs of your abundant grace.
Nourish us through these gifts,
that we might proclaim your steadfast love
in our communities and in the world,
through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

When our congregation gathered for the celebration of Holy Communion, we heard again the story of God's mighty acts and of the love shown us in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. With thanksgiving we remembered that "in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

The people of our congregation were given assurance of our Lord's presence through the gift of his Holy Spirit. As you worship in your homes, we remember the gift of communion that we share.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall never hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

At this time, you may remember the gift of holy communion with your own bread and cup.

Communion Blessing The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace. **Amen**

COMMUNION BLESSING

God of the welcome table,
in this meal we have feasted on your goodness
and have been united by your presence among us.
Empower us to go forth sustained by these gifts
so that we may share your neighborly love with all,
through Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life.
Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.**

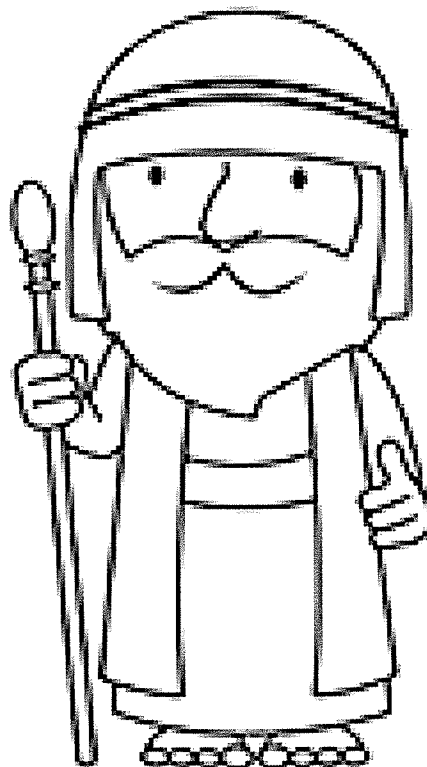
BLESSING

**LIFE IS SHORT
AND WE DO NOT HAVE
MUCH TIME TO
GLADDEN
THE HEARTS
OF THOSE WHO
TRAVEL WITH US
SO BE SWIFT TO LOVE
MAKE HASTE TO BE KIND
AND GO IN PEACE
TO LOVE AND SERVE
THE LORD**

ALAN - FREDERIC AMIEL

God said....

**“I will be
with you.”**



Exodus 3:12

ESV

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Praying together at Holy Cross – August 30, 2020

This summer, we are ‘searching for significance’ in this life of faith. When the world is full of change, we could choose to ‘lay low’ and wait for things to blow over. Or we could search for our own significance as the Body of Christ. We pray, Lord, for your help and guidance as we journey together toward that goal.



Lord, in your mercy Hear Our Prayer

We pray for those in leadership in our country, our state and our cities. May God sustain them and continue to point them to compassionate, quick and well-informed response.

Lord, in your mercy Hear Our Prayer

We pray for those isolated in these times of pandemic. Be a friend to those who struggle today.*(specific people are mentioned here)*

Lord, in your mercy Hear Our Prayer

We pray for firefighters, police and military as they struggle to care for our population. *(specific people are mentioned here)*

Lord, in your mercy Hear Our Prayer

We pray for businesses and their employees struggling in times of change. *(specific people are mentioned here)*

Lord, in your mercy Hear Our Prayer

We pray for innovation and inspiration to we who desire to be your church in these times. *(specific people are mentioned here)*

Lord, in your mercy Hear Our Prayer

For this and all those matters, circumstances and individuals whose needs are brought to mind at this time. *(specific people are mentioned here)*

Lord, in your mercy Hear Our Prayer

We pray for Holy Cross leadership as they imagine new ways of being of service in your community, Lord. Thank you, Lord, for loving us. It is what makes all the difference. Amen.