

1 Chronicles 17:16

Then King David went in, sat before the LORD, and said, "Who am I, O LORD God, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far?"

March 29, 2022,

From the leadership and Council of Holy Cross Lutheran Church and from one Christian to another, welcome to Holy Cross. Strange, that I would use a statement that you would expect when you enter the building to start a letter? But for some of you who read this, it may be your only connection to Holy Cross and I want you to know that you are welcome. Over the past couple years how we as a church connect with our members and friends to share the love of Christ has changed. Yes, we still meet at 10:00 am every Sunday in the building at Lansing and Sunnyview, but I pray that our mission of spreading God's love goes beyond that.

I have been thinking a lot the last couple days about a question that Pastor Curtis posed to the transition team and the team will soon be asking you: "Who are we?" We are the church on the corner that meets on Sunday and who have a lot of cars in the parking lot on Tuesdays, but who are we? As with King David, we need to be asking this question but first of ourselves, then of God and the community around us.

Who are we to you, the reader of this letter? Please take some time to think about it. If you answer, "my church", what does that mean to you? Each of us will answer that question in our own way, but I predict that our answers will have a lot of commonalities.

Who are we to the people of the neighborhood? They see our building and know that we are a church, but do we have a real presence in the neighborhood? What do we mean to them? Would they notice or care if we were gone?

Who are we to the groups who use our building? There are about a dozen groups with whom we shared our building. Are we just a landlord or are we reaching them in a deeper way?

Who are we to the community at large? We have shared ministries with many groups throughout the city. Our size, the age of our congregation, and the

pandemic has hampered our involvement, but do we still have a presence in the city of Salem, the city of Shalom?

I'm adding another level to the question: "Are we who we think we are?" How do we know? I'm asking you to help answer that question. Pastor Curtis has asked the transition team to reach out into the community to try to answer that question. There are only a few of us and many of you. You have connections throughout the community that we may not, so please talk to people you know and ask them. Help us determine what our actual presence in the community is and give us feedback.

I have a third question: "Are we who we want to be?" but I'll save that for another time.

Your thoughts and opinions are needed and valued, so come to and participate in the transition discussions; give me, Karen Halverson, or any of the transition team a call; corner us in the narthex; call the church office and talk with Bryan Struve or address a note to the transition team and send it to Holy Cross, 1998 Lansing Ave. 97301. You get the point, share what you are thinking with us.

Your brother in Christ,

Loran Sell, President

Please join us this coming **Sunday, April 3, 2022, at 10:00 AM**, as we continue our Lenten journey with a Service of the Word & Sacrament, led by Pastor Zieske. Masks are optional, required when singing, and we continue to sit socially distant. If you were unable to attend, video recordings of this and other previous services are available on the Holy Cross YouTube channel at;

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiHbmFBDWLGIW-jcI8iRhOQ>

**Worshipping at Home with Holy Cross Lutheran Church
April 3, 2022 – Fifth Sunday in Lent**

INVOCATION

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of God, who makes a way in the wilderness, walks with us, and guides us in our pilgrimage.

Amen.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy One,

we confess that we have wandered far from you:

we have not trusted your promises,

we have ignored your prophets in our own day,

we have squandered our inheritance of grace,

we have failed to recognize you in our midst.

Have mercy on us!

Forgive us and turn us again to you.

Teach us to follow in your ways, assure us again of your love, and help us to love our neighbor.

Amen.

Beloved in Christ, the Word draws near to you, and all who call out to God shall be saved.

In Jesus, God comes to you again and again and gathers you under wings of love. In † Jesus' name, your sins are forgiven.

God journeys with you and teaches you how to live in love.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Creator God, you prepare a new way in the wilderness, and your grace waters our desert. Open our hearts to be transformed by the new thing you are doing, that our lives may proclaim the extravagance of your love given to all through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

READINGS AND PSALM

Isaiah 43:16-21

The LORD gives water in the wilderness to the chosen people

Psalm 126

Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy. (Ps. 126:5)

Philippians 3:4b-14

To know Christ and his resurrection, to share in his sufferings

John 12:1-8

Mary anoints Jesus for his burial

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:13-14)

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW 335 “Jesus, Keep Me Near The Cross”

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

Drawn close to the heart of God, we offer these prayers for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Do a new thing in the church. Free us from paradigms that no longer serve the gospel and bring forward leaders who imagine fresh ways of doing ministry. Give us courage in the face of change. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Do a new thing for creation. Reverse the trajectory of climate change and environmental catastrophe. Revive habitats already impaired by human

disregard. Amplify the voices of climate scientists and researchers working to chart a new course. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.** Do a new thing in our world. Break barriers that prevent political enemies from working together for the well-being of all. Make a way for peace and collaboration among the nations. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Do a new thing for those who suffer. Reveal a path for any who are unemployed or underemployed, for those experiencing homelessness, and for all who struggle with money. Comfort those who grieve and restore those who are sick (*especially*). Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Do a new thing within us. Direct us into encounters that broaden our understanding of the human experience. Amplify voices that are ignored or devalued (*especially*). Deliver us especially from the scourge of racism. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Do a new thing in our death. Fill us with the knowledge of Christ and the power of his resurrection as we give thanks for (*names and*) all the saints who have attained the prize of their heavenly call. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Accept the prayers we bring, O God, on behalf of a world in need, for the sake of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

OFFERING PRAYER

Extravagant God, you have blessed us with the fullness of creation. Now we gather at your feast where you offer us the food that satisfies. Take and use what we offer here, come among us, and feed us with the body and blood of Christ, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

✠ 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. Now we bring to you this same bread of life and this same cup of blessing, that you may be strengthened through your participation in the body of Christ.

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.

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

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Blessed Jesus, in this rich meal of grace, you have fed us with your body, the bread of life. Now send us forth to bear your life-giving hope to a world in need. **Amen.**

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;

grant us peace, grant us peace, Lamb of God.

BLESSING

You are children of God, anointed with the oil of gladness and strengthened for the journey. Almighty God,

motherly, majestic, and mighty, † bless you this day and always. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Jesus meets you on the way. **Thanks be to God.**