



HOLY
CROSS
LUTHERAN CHURCH

ANNUAL REPORT

2022



HELPING PEOPLE
KNOW, LIVE,
AND SHARE THE
LOVE OF CHRIST

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Helping People Know, Live, and Share the Love of Christ



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FROM THE LEAD PASTOR

Give Today

As we begin a New Year it's always good to evaluate our previous year. As a church the people of Holy Cross have served and blessed our community time and time again. In our condensed annual report we won't have a chance to highlight all the amazing things that God's people have done through the body of Christ at Holy Cross, but you will certainly get an amazing taste of it. From Ruby's Pantry to Care Portal to the Dorothy Day House and MN Adult & Teen Challenge, the India mission of Suresh, the Native American school supply outreach through VBS, the God Loves You Tour, and Care Portal Christmas. It has truly been an amazing year that has seen service, effort, and blessing for those outside of our walls. When we evaluated our ministry plan two years ago and determined that we wanted to be a church that focused on others outside our walls, it would've been impossible to imagine the blessing of the Lord's work that has been accomplished in the past year.



For last year's ministry plan we determined that we had started some very impactful and meaningful new outreaches with Ruby's Pantry and Care Portal the previous year and that we should turn our attention to internal discipleship to provide for the growth of our members and community. We prayed about how to accomplish that, and regular small groups were implemented, starting with the Chosen Series. Ernie Freudenburg joined our staff as the Connecting Coordinator, and Diane Straka joined us as the Technology Coordinator. We dreamed about starting a children's discipleship program, which materialized into Kids 4 Truth; we asked God to provide us with a Pastor of Discipleship to lead our new and important emphasis, and Pastor Jordan Schut answered the call. All the while we continued our vital core ministries during Connecting Hour and beyond.

This year we have asked the Lord to help us with the emphasis of stewardship. When we restructured the leadership team and reworked our Constitution after our merger with Family of Christ, we decided that the church would be led by three primary teams – Outreach, Discipleship, and Stewardship. For the past two years we have seen God move in miraculous ways as we asked Him to lead and provide in these areas, and I expect nothing less in the coming year. Although I believe it may not be as glamorous of an emphasis as the other two, it is the third leg of our stool that we surely need to accomplish all that God has in store for us as a family of Christ here at Holy Cross.

As we begin this New Year, I ask that you would celebrate with me all that you have helped materialize through the people of Holy Cross over the past year and pray about how God might use you to aid in this new emphasis. The time to give is now. Stewardship requires the faith to give in the now without knowing about the later. That is why it takes faith to accomplish it and why Jesus regularly taught parables about stewardship, because we never know when the King is watching, and we never know when He will return. Give Today.

Thank You For Your Commitment To Christ.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Niederstadt'.

Rev. Jeff Niederstadt, Lead Pastor

FROM THE PASTOR OF DISCIPLESHIP

Journey of Discipleship



“Jordan Schut, associate pastor, Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Rochester, MN, Minnesota South District.” With those words, a call was simultaneously issued and received. As we sat in Concordia Seminary’s chapel, Pastor Jeff and Michelle Niederstadt, Chris and Cindy Wessel, Katie Schut and myself heard those words spoken simultaneously. With simple words, God’s will and call were announced to us and the Holy Cross community; our prayers were answered.

Meanwhile, countless prayers were being prayed by this community in Rochester. Several of those were from the call committee as they worked tirelessly to determine how an associate pastor might benefit Holy Cross’ mission and staff. Their work led to an emphasis on discipleship: how the new pastor and the Holy Cross community would grow in God’s Word and in relationship with one another. Through a season of anticipation and trust, those prayers too were answered.

Since then, God has continued fervently working. From outdoor worship to VBS, Ruby’s Pantry to CarePortal Christmas, Kidz Alive to Kids 4 Truth, NightLife! to joint youth events, so much has occurred throughout these few months. God has been at work through many to start and sustain new ministries, such as discipling children in Kids 4 Truth. Volunteers continue to serve alongside outreach ministries as a substantial crew once again gathered in January to distribute food to waiting cars at Ruby’s Pantry. Regular happenings returned with our fall kick-off launching us into a new year of Kidz Alive, Connecting Hour, NightLife!, Life Groups, and more. In it all, God is discipling His people.



This next year, we will continue to walk as disciples of Christ, knowing, living, and sharing His love and helping others do the same. May the good Lord, who has equipped us for service in His kingdom, make disciples of us who create disciples of others.



DISCIPLESHIP

Celebrate Discipleship with Five Areas that will Lift us to New Heights

Life Groups

We've established 3 types of Life Groups: short term, established, and club.

The focus of the group is living out the gospel.

Welcome

We plan for guests. A greeter team has been organized for each worship service.

We expect and strive to make guests feel welcome.

Service

We are identifying all opportunities to serve in our congregation. We want to use our spiritual gifts.

Sharing our love through service within the congregation and community

Education

We give thanks to all who make our Sunday morning education hour a blessing for all ages.

Encouraging one another to dig deeper in the soil of God's word.

Fellowship

To relationally connect people to Jesus and to one another. We plan to have more family milestones recognized.

A relational lifestyle in all aspects of the congregation following the Acts 2:42 model.

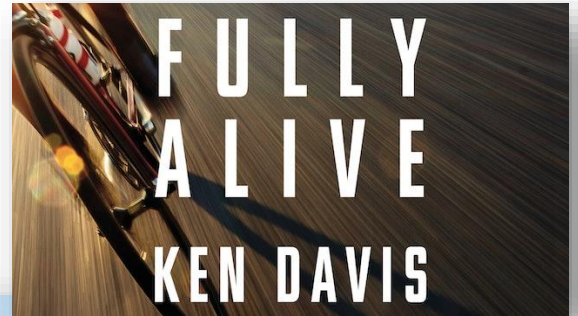
Our Discipleship team consists of Sherri Emedo as Team Leader, Julie Beise as Associate Leader for 2022, Karen Hutton, Ernie Freudenburg and Pastor Jordan Schut. Our thanks to Julie Beise for her leadership last year.

After many attempts to develop a working definition for discipleship, we agreed on, "It is the process that the Holy Spirit uses for each of us to grow up in Christ so that the Holy Spirit can use each of us to build up others in Christ." It is the Holy Spirit who calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies each of us. We get to enjoy the processes that He sets in motion for us!

Life Groups

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

Matthew 28:19-20



**Season Three Life Groups
coming to Holy Cross in April!**

OUTREACH



2022:

12 months...

150 Volunteers...

2,050 volunteer hours...

3,515 shares of food distributed...

\$7,904 raised...

Thousands of lives touched and changed
with the love of Christ...

Ruby's Pantry



Ruby's Pantry has been in full swing now for 16 months.

During those 16 months we've learned a few things, made a few adjustments, and braved some rain and snow. But more importantly, during those 16 months we allowed God to work through us while we fed families, helped organizations, shared smiles, prayed with and over our guests, and watched God do miracles.

Month after month, you as a congregation have showed up and provided the 60+ volunteers required for the distribution. As a result of your faithfulness—God showed up. We have numerous messages and social media posts from families who have been blessed by Ruby's pantry. For our one-year anniversary, we were able to bless two families with Hy-Vee gift cards, and we blessed one additional family with a free share of food. Our prayer team gets prayer requests each month and gets to hear how God is answering prayers and moving in the hearts and lives of our guests. Our volunteers hear repeated "thank you's" as cars move down our distribution line.



Throughout the year we have seen a steady increase in the number of people served and the number of shares distributed. As grocery prices increased, so did our number of shares distributed, and we finished the year with a record 392 shares distributed in November and 317 in December.

Any leftover food that is not distributed has been shared with many other organizations across the Rochester area.

There is a place for YOU at Ruby's Pantry. There is something for YOU to do. Come – experience what God will do not only through you, but in you!

There will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore, I command you to open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy, and to the poor.
Deuteronomy 15:11

Holy Cross shares the love of Christ by serving and blessing families in need through our CarePortal Ministry. In 2022 we responded to 117 requests from Olmsted County Social Services and Next Chapter Ministries (up 125% from 2021), serving 295 children (up 173% from 2021). These numbers include some double counts – when we served the same family multiple times – yet each request is unique and requires a team of people to help fulfill. We invested \$27,582 (up 78% from 2021) – which came from the following resources: \$16,864 came from individual donations to our CarePortal Fund (including some left over from 2021), \$4,354 came from funds we received through Ruby’s Pantry, \$3,864 came from proceeds of our Fruits of the Spirit garden sales, and \$2,500 came from a People’s Cooperative Operation Round Up grant. We also coordinated numerous pickups and deliveries of donated furniture that are not included in these financials. Praise God for enabling us to serve in such generous ways!!



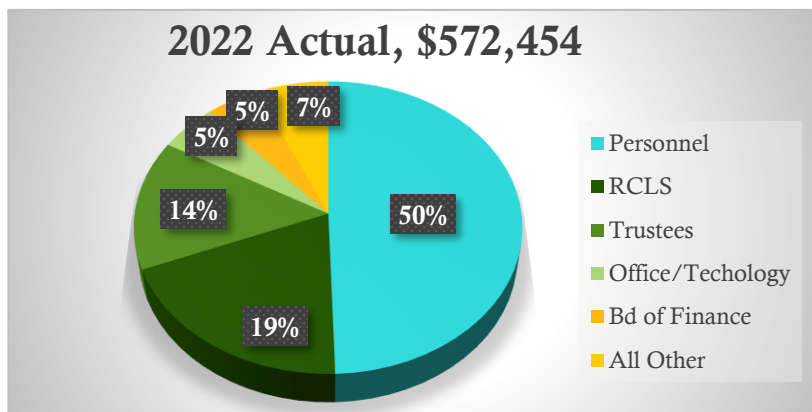
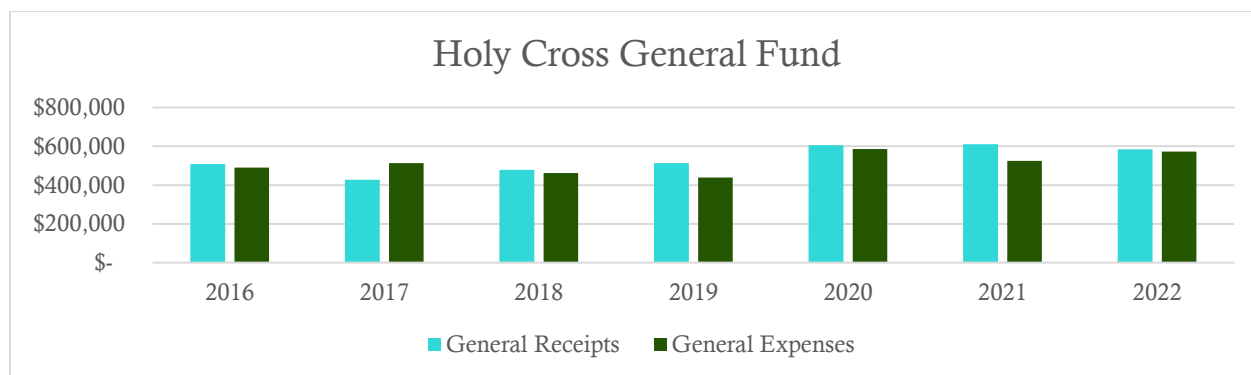
We blessed our CarePortal families with couches, tables, chairs, lamps, TVs, vacuums, beds, dressers, coats, boots, gloves, clothing, diapers, wash cloths & towels, pots & pans, cleaning supplies, security cameras, printers, car seats, strollers, wagons, bikes, lawn mower, gift cards, and food. We also helped some families with car repairs, carpet cleaning, rent, legal fees, and heating fuel. In December we hosted our first “CarePortal Christmas” and invited all the families we had served in 2022. We provided a meal, worship, and gifts for all the children. In total, 76 children received Christmas gifts from us, and every family felt welcome and blessed.



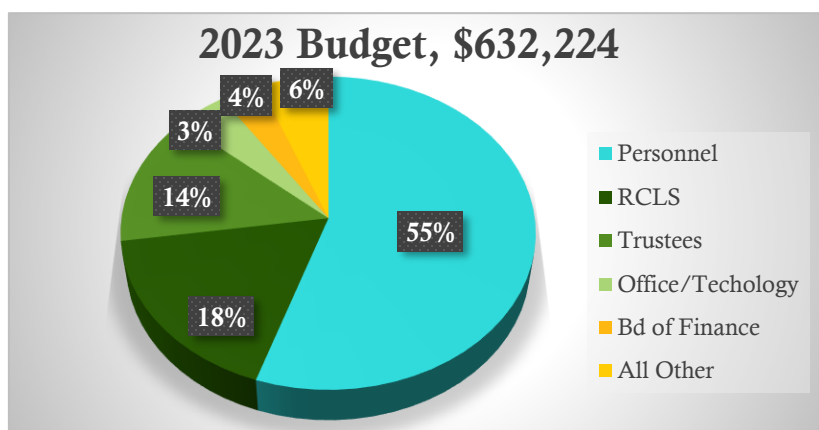
This thank you note from Victim Services nicely articulates the kind of impact our CarePortal Ministry is making in our community: “I would like to thank you so very much for blessing our client with a beautiful long jacket and fashionable boots as well as a very, very cute hat, mittens, and snow pants for her child. She sent me a note asking me to thank you for these items. She felt very blessed and was so excited to have warm clothing for herself and her child! She was very overwhelmed and thankful. I thank you for blessing her – it made a difference in her life. She had a beautiful smile because of you!”

I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.
Philippians 4:18

Holy Cross was richly blessed with financial resources in 2022. We received \$584,997 in General Fund gifts and spent \$572,454 for a \$12,543 surplus. Below is a multiyear look at the giving versus expense trends.























As Holy Cross moves into 2023 we have increased staff for our ministry and also have faced 2022 inflation in facility and program expenses. Holy Cross has budgeted \$632,224 in expenses. This will require about a 5.9 % increase in gifts. We are confident that God will provide but ask members to consider their commitment to a portion of ministry support. In 2021 and 2022 we launched exciting new outreach ministries, and we filled our vacant Associate Pastor position.



Members can do a few things. We ask you to generously support the General Fund, for without the staff and facility very little ministry happens. Our staff along with key volunteer leaders also marshal the outreach through Care Portal, Ruby's Pantry, and support of Brother Suresh's mission outreach in India. If you are inclined and able to make designated offerings, we ask you to focus them on these and the building fund. While many other worthwhile options exist, Holy Cross wants to ensure solid 2023 support for our key ministry areas.

2022 LEADERSHIP TEAM

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS				
	Mark Matthias President	Barb Jerabek Vice President	Roger Lindahl Treasurer	Jo Dean Secretary
TEAM LEADS				
	Brandon Marsh Elder Associate Lead	Sherri Emedo Discipleship Team Lead	Julie Beise Discipleship Associate Lead	Adam McClung Outreach Team Lead
				
	Denise Frey Outreach Associate Lead	Shelley DeYoung Trustees Team Lead	Ken Schultz Finance Team Lead	John Beise Personnel Team Lead
Vacant Positions • Lead Elder • Volunteers Team Lead				
	Laura Rhee RCLS Representative	Dan Johnson RCLS Representative	Cindy Wessel Director of Worship	Ernie Freudenburg Connecting Coordinator
STAFF and VOLUNTEER STAFF				
	Diane Straka Technology Coordinator	Pastor Jeff Niederstadt Lead Pastor	Pastor Jordan Schut Associate Pastor	Pastor Jeff Niederstadt Lead Pastor

WORSHIP @ HOLY CROSS

Leading People into the Presence of God

*Serve the Lord with gladness!
Come into His presence with singing!*
Psalm 100:2



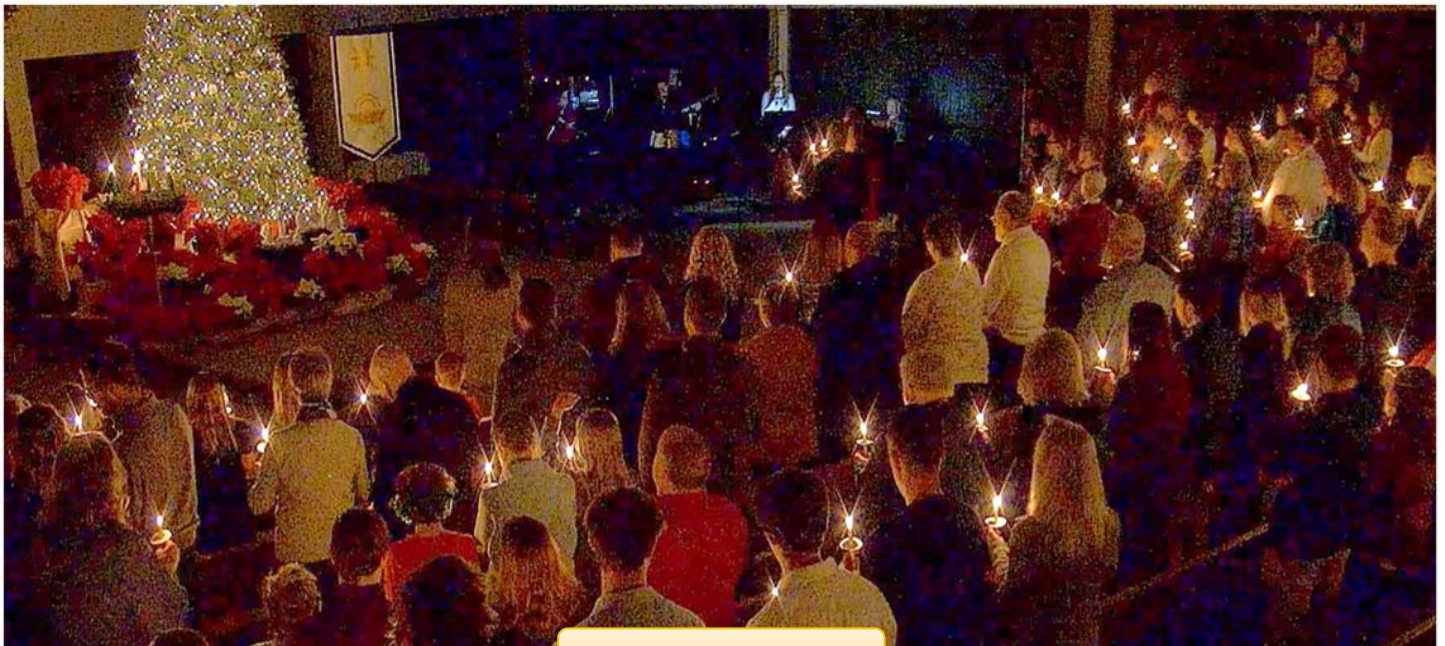
Kids 4 Truth



RCLS Chapel



Monumental VBS



Christmas Eve 2022



Christmas Road Trip

ELDERS REPORT

The 2022 Board of Elders (BOE) membership included the following: Brandon Marsh (Associate Lead), Adam McClung, Tim Gerber, Dan Johnson, Dan Kuball, Kevin Kelle, and Adam Morrissey. The BOE serves Christ and Holy Cross by providing spiritual nurturing and oversight, individually and corporately.

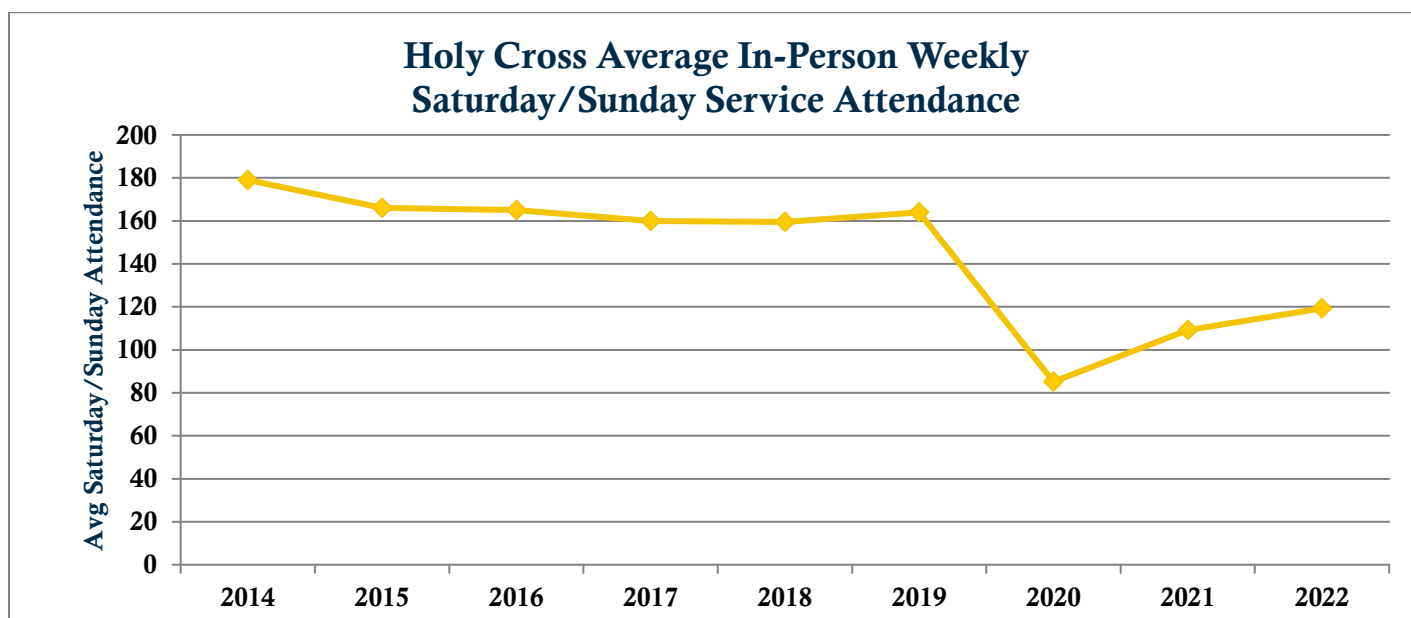
In the winter of 2022, we gathered to worship God both Saturday evening and Sunday morning with Sunday services also being available online. Weekly average worship attendance continued to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing in 2022 from 109 to 120 individuals (see Table and Graph below).

During 2022, Holy Cross received 11 individuals as new members, while 2 individuals had their membership transferred to another church, and 9 individuals transferred to churches outside of Rochester. Five individuals were baptized at Holy Cross.

In-person Sat/Sun Worship Attendance by Week

2022 Summary	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Week 1 Total	59	95	138	112	75	93	127	86	88	103	137	149
Week 2 Total	127	101	106	160	104	100	119	135	150	126	127	128
Week 3 Total	103	110	119	244	113	106	119	124	125	94	130	153
Week 4 Total	83	97	99	124	108	151	135	96	149	107	109	248
Week 5 Total	77				140		142			141		
Average	90	101	116	160	108	113	128	110	128	114	126	170

Year to Year Monthly In-Person Attendance



CORE IDENTITY

Holy Cross Mission Statement

Helping People Know, Live, and Share the Love of Christ

Our Vision:

God's Love in Action

Come as You Are – You Are Welcome Here

Find Peace and Healing – Discover Grace, Mercy, and Compassion

Grow in God's Word – Be Transformed by the Truth of Jesus

Share Life Together – Be Devoted to the Fellowship of Believers

Serve Others – Impact Your Community and Beyond

Our Values:

Grace - Grace invites everyone to consider Jesus

The Bible - The Bible is the indisputable authority and gives us everything we need to know and believe for Christian faith and life

Relationships - God uses relationships to nurture our life in Jesus

Prayer - God's guidance and blessing are sought through prayer

Service - To follow in the footsteps of Christ is to live a life of service

Compassion - Jesus looked on people with compassion

Our Measure:

A person who Knows, Lives, and Shares the Love of Christ Reflects the 5 Rs.

Receive - Knowing the Love of Christ begins when we receive him as our Savior and Lord.

Remain - Living the Love of Christ means continual growth in our relationship with Jesus.

Relate - Living the Love of Christ means learning to relate our life in Jesus to the people and world around us.

Rejoice - Living the Love of Christ means rejoicing in the presence, power, and purpose of God.

Respond - Sharing the Love of Christ means using our God-given gifts and resources to fulfill our mission.

*Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.
1 John 3:18*

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Love in Action



Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.
Romans 12:9-13

Paul's words to the Romans echo with concepts which are consistent with the Holy Cross mission and vision. In my Bible, the section header at Romans 12:9 says, "Love in Action", which we've adopted as shorthand for our Vision ("God's Love in Action"). That is what we aspire to be: a body of believers who, when seen by those outside our walls, draws their interest in learning more ~ because we are humbly devoted to one another in love, joyful in hope, sharing with those in need, practicing hospitality.

Hopefully this was exhibited in our actions this past year. Our year 2022 included a focus on Discipleship and saw some major milestones achieved. Our 2023 focus will be on Stewardship, which includes addressing needs and opportunities in the areas of people, facilities, and finances. This Annual Report has a variety of stories to tell in regards to each; I hope you take the time to read them, and then raise your hand when God calls.

2022 Highlights:

- Pastor Jordan and Katie. Need I say more? Adding a new pastor is a major milestone in the life of any congregation, and we've been blessed already with their energy and creativity.
- Implementation of One Church software. Thank you, Diane Straka, for leading this effort and continuing to maintain it. The software provides a solid base for us to organize and connect with each other.
- CarePortal and Ruby's Pantry. Holy Cross actively supports other ministries (POBLO, Dorothy Day, and RCLS to name a few), but CarePortal and Ruby's are outstanding in promoting service to people in need. This is being the hands and feet of Jesus!
- Blueprint for Discipleship. Thank you Ernie Freudenberg and the Discipleship ministry team for crafting an outline for promoting activities in discipleship, which is "the process that the Holy Spirit uses for each of us to grow up in Christ so that each can build up others in Christ."
- There are many other highlights – the God Loves You Tour, Kids 4 Truth, the approval by District of our new Constitution and Bylaws, among others; but at the core, the Word was preached, and our great and mighty God was worshiped in spirit and truth.

2023 Ministry Plan:

- For 2023 we will focus more attention on our third major Ministry Area, Stewardship. This focus on time, talent, and treasure will help ensure we have a solid foundation on which to build out and grow our face to the community, and thus increase our mission impact. I look forward to sharing more with you at the Annual Meeting and in future communications.
- God has called us to love one another, and especially those in the family of believers. We look forward to seeing you in person in 2023, to sharing our challenges and joys with each other, and to working side by side in responding to God's call with "Love in Action". God's blessings on you and on this congregation!

JESUS



REVOLUTION

At Holy Cross this Lent

Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22, 6:30 p.m.

Friday, March 3, 6:00 p.m. – Fish Fry

Friday, March 10, 6:00 p.m. – Potluck

Friday, March 17, 6:00 p.m. – Potluck

Friday, March 31, 6:00 p.m. – Fish Fry

Maundy Thursday, April 6, 6:30 p.m.

God is not finished with today's generation.



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2703 Ninth Ave NW
Rochester, MN 55901

507-289-1354

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