

# Fully Alive!

COMMUNICATING AND CELEBRATING THE MISSION AND MINISTRIES OF HOLY CROSS

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## BECOMING THE BRIDE

The Bible is full of language and illustration about the church being the bride of Christ. It is also resplendent with imagery of preparing for a wedding and the marriage supper of the Lamb. The parable of the ten virgins and their wise or unwise preparation reminds us of the difference between those who are looking for and preparing for Jesus' return and those who are consumed with the things of this world. If you had a wedding coming up, you would be fervently preparing – making lists, picking out venues, acquiring services, and inviting people.

One of the things I get to do as a pastor is to help prepare couples for marriage. A resource I typically use to facilitate that process is "Ready To Wed" by Greg and Erin Smalley. The session on "Valuing Our Differences" includes an illustration: a madly-in-love engaged couple who are deeply infatuated with each other writes down a list of attributes they cherish in each other. They do this in a matter of seconds without thinking or questioning their evaluation. Just five short years later, the same couple may struggle to come up with even a few positive characteristics which describe their spouse. What has changed? Time. What seemed so easy a few years earlier is now a much more difficult task because of the way the relationship has changed. The Smalleys recommend that couples keep their original list and review it often, working hard to look for the good in each other regardless of time, and remembering to value differences, which probably attracted you to each other in the first place!

**"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word. He did this to present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless."**  
Ephesians 5:25-27

If we are not careful, this same sort of apathy can creep into our relationship with Christ. At some point and time, I am sure that your relationship with Christ was vibrant, new, and alive, but now it may be more of a struggle. Certainly our relationships with others and with Christ have peaks and valleys, but have you settled for the valley of dry bones in your relationship with the living God? God's commendation for you is to press in and press through – to come up higher and pursue your first love with renewed passion and vigor. Don't settle, taking for granted the grace of God that was provided at the sacrifice of His own dear Son. In the letter to the church at Ephesus, God warns of this taking place in our relationship with Him. "I know your works, your labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot tolerate evil people. You have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and you have found them to be liars. I know that you have persevered and endured hardships for the sake of my name, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you: You have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember then how far you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. Otherwise, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent." (Revelation 2:2-5)

Are you taking God for granted, or are you actively working on cherishing your relationship with Christ? How has your pursuit been going of producing fruit that will last? Have you been able to express love, choose joy, and act kindly? None of us will ever be perfect, but if you have decided to just let yourself go, you're probably not being a very good spouse.

"Let us be glad, rejoice, and give him glory, because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has prepared herself. She was given fine linen to wear, bright and pure. For the fine linen represents the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, 'Write: Blessed are those invited to the marriage feast of the Lamb!' He also said to me, 'These words of God are true.'" (Revelation 19:7-9)

~Pastor Jeff Niederstadt

## LETTER FROM THE HOLY CROSS PRESIDENT

Dear Holy Cross Family,

On February 4, 2024, we held our annual Voter's Meeting in order to highlight and celebrate the Lord's work this past year through his people at Holy Cross, and to share the plans we were led to adopt for 2024. Seventy-six voters attended, over ¾ in person.

After we opened, Pastor Jeff walked through the Annual Report for 2023, highlighting the Lord's work in Stewardship (our 2023 theme), Discipleship, and Outreach. If you haven't yet looked through the Annual Report, it is well worthwhile, and available at [www.holycross-church.org/AnnualReports/](http://www.holycross-church.org/AnnualReports/)

[AnnualReport2023.pdf](#) or near the Holy Cross Welcome Center.

Your generosity was evident in your tithes and offerings in 2023 (thank you!), which Roger Lindahl detailed, and we elected new (and renewing) members to the Executive Council. Thanks to those who have volunteered to help lead this people in ministry! Don't hesitate to contact me if you'd like to learn more about our open positions, to lead our Outreach, Personnel, or Volunteer Ministries Team.

Sandy Abenstein described our needed roof repair and the planned Sanctuary renovation. The Congregation approved moving forward with the roof repair; planning for the Sanctuary renovation is

still underway and more information will be shared as available. Did you know it's been over 50 years since the Sanctuary was built, with very few significant changes since?

We shared the Council-approved Ministry Plan for 2024, and Pastor Jeff emphasized the Good News we are to spread through our 2024 Evangelism emphasis. The Annual Meeting was a time of good fellowship and reflection, and I am excited for what lies ahead. The Lord has good things in store for His people here at Holy Cross!

In Christ,

~Mark Matthias, HC President

## ANNOUNCING "RAISE THE ROOF"

If you have been in the Sanctuary recently you have seen the large patch to the front of the altar, as well as some stains on the ceiling due to a roof leak. The project has an estimated cost of \$150,000 to replace the Sanctuary and Parish Hall roofs, as well as repair any interior damage. Thanks to God, Holy Cross has had a number of years of budget surplus, which allows us to earmark \$100,000 of existing savings to the project.

This still leaves a \$50,000 need, so we are launching a "RAISE THE ROOF" capital campaign.

The plan is to raise these funds between March 10, 2024, and December 29, 2024. Contributions may be in the form of one or more lump sums, as well as weekly, semi-monthly or monthly amounts that match the donor's budget needs. A letter with more project detail, frequently asked questions and answers, along with a pledge

card will be sent to Holy Cross members and friends shortly. Let's "Raise the Roof" together!



## TUITION GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR HOLY CROSS FAMILIES ENROLLED AT RCLS!

Holy Cross offers need-based tuition assistance to Holy Cross families who enroll their child/children at RCLS. If your family is enrolling for the 2024-2025 School year at RCLS, you are encouraged to apply for a tuition grant for your child/children. To apply by March 15, 2024, please navigate to the [Holy Cross website](#); select MINISTRIES, RCLS, then applicable tab based on grade.

For grades K-8, tuition grants are based on needs as identified by Blackbaud Financial Aid Management. For the 2024-25 school

year, the minimum grant amount is \$457.50, and the maximum grant amount is \$2,287.50 per student.

For RCLS Early Childhood Stepping Stones (PreSchool and PreKindergarten), Holy Cross uses One Church Software application process for tuition assistance grants. Grants are provided per session for a maximum of 10 sessions for each student. Families request the amount of tuition assistance needed per session (\$46.50, \$139.50, or \$232.50) for the 2024-2025 school year.

If you are considering the Christ-centered education offered at RCLS and would like to know more about the school, we encourage you to call the school at (507) 289-3267 to schedule a visit. Or visit their website [www.rcls.net](http://www.rcls.net).

If you would like more information or have questions regarding the Holy Cross Tuition Grant program, contact the program administrators:

Treva Miller (treva.miller5@gmail.com) or Roger Lindahl (separtners@aol.com).

## RCLS UPDATE

The second half of the school year is off to an amazing start! Lutheran schools week was held recently, and the whole school joined in the festivities. Check out the RCLS Facebook page for video summaries of each day! We welcomed special guest, Dazzling Dave, who captivated the children with his amazing yo-yo skills. This led to a new club offering at RCLS this spring, the Yo-Yo Club, so students can continue to sharpen their skills.



The students recently displayed their brain power at the annual spelling bee. There were some incredibly tough words this year. We are so proud of all our student learners!

The basketball season recently came to a close with the RCLS Invitational Tournament. Congratulations to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys team, who were tournament champions after a nail-biting final game!



Preparations for the spring musical are well underway. Please plan to join us for Little Mermaid, Jr. on March 15-17. Tickets go on sale March 6 for theater patrons and March 11 for all.

Save the dates for spring break: March 29-April 7, VIP Day on April 19 and RCLS Field Day on May 17!

~Laura Rhee, HC Rep for RCLS



## "SAINTS ALIVE" SENIOR MINISTRY LAUNCHES ON MARCH 14

We're eager to once again offer a senior ministry in our congregation. Why "once again?" There once was a Saints Alive Senior Ministry at Holy Cross. Its prolonged inactivity has been linked to busy work schedules, COVID, and a lack of leadership. The transition to retirement has recently occurred for several of our families. Relaunching this ministry with a fresh vision is becoming increasingly

necessary, and we are excited to see how God blesses this ministry.

### The Saints Alive Ministry's Vision

1. The focus of this ministry will be senior life and its stages.
2. This ministry will help the senior population acquire Christian life skills so they can be active members and leaders of the church.

3. Other senior members of the congregation will benefit from this ministry.
4. This ministry will plan important activities and subjects by utilizing the resources of Holy Cross members and the community.



## DISCIPLESHIP CORNER

*And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me." (Isaiah 6:8)*

The prophet Isaiah received an astonishing commission from the Lord. After he is called as prophet, Isaiah is asked to preach a message to deaf ears (Isaiah 6:9-13), a message of God's impending judgment. Seeing what Isaiah and other prophets endured can make us reluctant to follow in their footsteps. Isaiah even willingly signed up for this! If this is what

someone eager to go is given, we might shy away for fear of being sent for the same.

There is good news for us; Isaiah's prophecy was completed. There is no need to go for God. The stump [which was Christ] was destroyed, so that Jesus would rise again. With the resurrection of Jesus, we are not drafted to go for God, but are prepared for a life of joining with Jesus. It is the emphasis of Joining Jesus that surrounds this year at Holy Cross.

We do not need to be the ringleaders defending our prized lion from the crowds

around us. The lion has more than enough power itself. Our efforts to defend God or go for Him are like defending that lion, God doesn't need our help. The ones who do need our help are our neighbors. Instead of conscripting us for service, or sending us in His place, Jesus walks with us as we live our disciplined lives. We join our lives with Jesus' mission by bearing the Holy Spirit's fruit. He invites every disciplined child of God to participate in His mission. Join us in joining with Jesus!

~Pastor Jordan Schut



## ILLUMINATION STATION: GETTING TO KNOW OUR FAMILY @ HOLY CROSS

### SPOTLIGHT ON THE WESSELS

Chris and Cindy grew up 13 miles from each other in Truman and Fairmont, MN, respectively. Chris' first band director was Cindy's mom, and he had played in bands with Cindy's dad, but Chris and Cindy did not meet until after high school. They met while playing flute at a bandshell on a lake and have now enjoyed 38 years of marriage, thanks to God!

Chris and Cindy are blessed to have a musical family and enjoyed a handful of years playing professionally as the band, *Momentum*. Ehren (saxophone) lives in Minneapolis, Jacob (drums/guitar) and his wife, Becca, live in Rochester with their 2-year-old daughter, Madelyn (a budding musician with her own growing arsenal of musical instruments!), and are expecting another daughter in April 2024; Katrina (vocals/piano/guitar/trumpet) lives in Maple Grove.

A passion for music is what drives Chris. He started playing professionally at age 16 and studied saxophone at Berklee College of Music in Boston but detoured into a long career in IT. He finally resumed music-related work, opening his own band instrument repair business, and recently began a position at The Music Mart in Rochester.

A passion for Jesus and people is what drives Cindy. She grew up knowing that she wanted to use music to tell people about Jesus. She earned degrees in Church Music and Bible at University at Northwestern in St. Paul, MN. Cindy was installed on the ministry staff at Holy Cross in 1997 and still serves as Director of Worship, overseeing the Worship Ministries with excitement to see what God does next in our midst!

Chris joins Cindy when he plays his instruments for worship. In earlier years he served a six-year term as Lead Elder at Holy Cross, helped with construction of the pergola and the Courtyard paver path, and did whatever else was needed (ask him why he's called the "garbage bag man"! ). He loves browsing antique stores and flea markets for treasures, especially vintage saxophones and trumpets, antique radios, pocket knives, and fountain pens. He currently plays with The Soul Train, Uptown Jazz, and After School Special, subbing with other bands, and he has been teaching woodwind lessons at Dover/Eyota High School.

Cindy goes along for the ride with a lot of Chris' activities, but she craves time with family and friends, playing games or just being together. She likes to read, swim, and loves to study and memorize God's Word. Together, Chris and Cindy like to go to dinner with friends, bicycle, hike, and garden.

Chris loves the book of Proverbs, because it contains so much wisdom about life with God and other people. Cindy has been on a journey to learn more of what God means when He says to "be led by the Spirit" (Galatians 5:18 and Romans 8:14), which has resulted in her much more eagerly awaiting Jesus' second coming (Hebrews 9:28). Come, Lord Jesus!



### SPRING IS COMING...



## ...So is Holy Cross' Annual Gerten's Plant Sale!

Proceeds support Holy Cross Courtyard Gardens. Watch for order information next month.



## JOINING JESUS OVERVIEW @ HOLY CROSS

## JOINING JESUS TIMELINE @ HOLY CROSS

## Fridays in Lent—Joining Jesus Show Us How Videos

March 1, 8, 15

6:00-7:30 pm

Potlucks! Bring a side dish.

## April 19-21—Joining Jesus Mission Discovery Weekend

Friday, April 19

6:30-8:00 pm

Leadership Introduction

Saturday, April 20

9:00 am-12:00 pm

Joining Jesus On His Mission Training

Sunday, April 21

Worship &amp; Connecting Hour

Mission Mindset

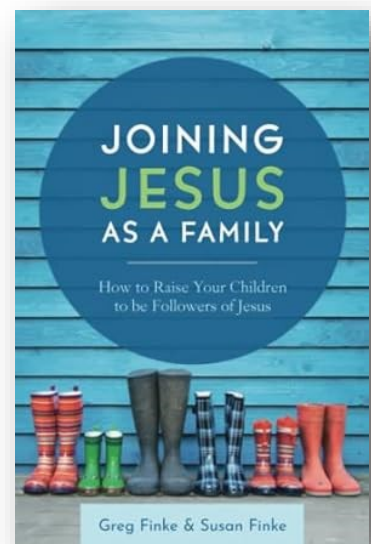
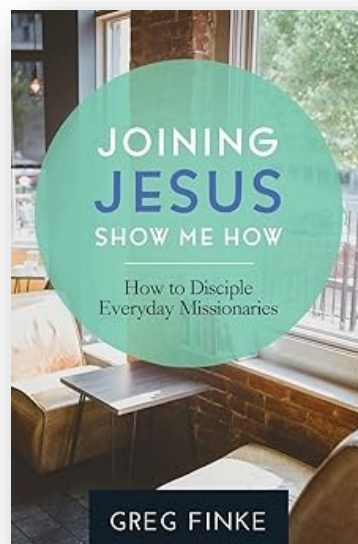
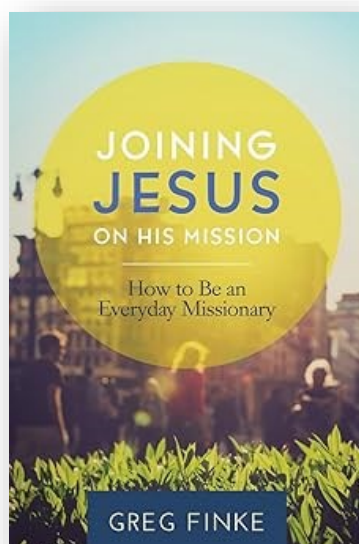
## WHAT is JOINING JESUS and Dwelling 1:14 all about anyway?

The “Mission Discovery Weekend” is designed to be a way to introduce congregations to what it could look like for them to join Jesus on His mission in their everyday lives and support each other as a congregation. The weekend is guaranteed to significantly advance the mission-conversation in congregations and among their leadership.

The name **Dwelling 1:14** references John 1:14 and the incarnational, missional nature both of Jesus and of those who would follow Him into the world. Dwelling 1:14 helps individuals, families, and congregations reorder their lives to join Jesus, have more fun, and spend more time enjoying people through missional living. Dwelling 1:14 is not about changing Sunday mornings but about what happens the rest of the week “out there” in the world, where our congregation lives. Dwelling 1:14 has found that when people support each other in seeking the Kingdom and joining Jesus in everyday life, really cool things begin to happen regularly! Check out more info at [www.dwelling114.org](http://www.dwelling114.org).

## RESOURCES

Check out these books from Joining Jesus:



## TREASURER'S REPORT

January receipts were \$8,771 per week, which is below the forecasted \$12,750 per week needed to cover 2024 budgeted expenses. January expenses reflect increased salary and benefit levels for 2024. Expenses were relatively normal.

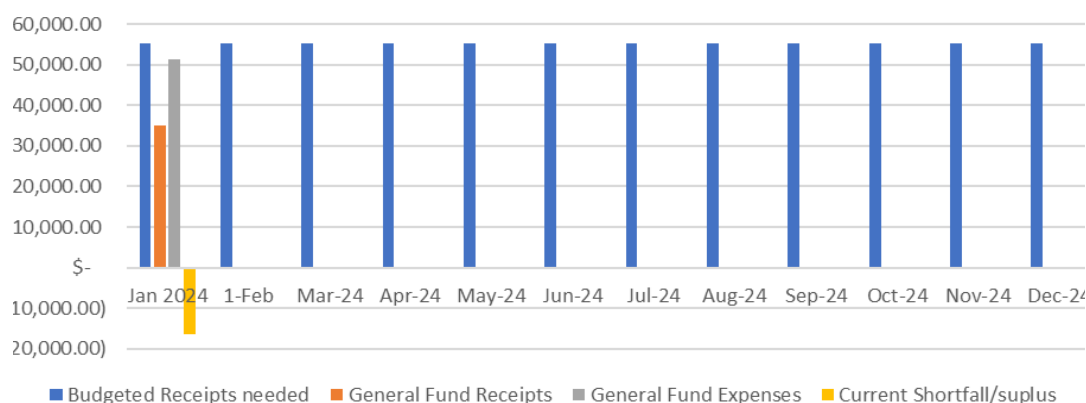
Cash Balance and savings are strong with \$105,050 in checking and \$179,446 in savings. LCEF funds in Certificates of De-

posit are \$85,418 (Regedahl). Additionally we have \$109,512 in T-bill Investments at Stifel.

~ Roger Lindahl, HC Treasurer

	January 2024	Prior January 2023
General fund receipts	\$35,085	\$51,087
General fund expenses	\$51,407	\$42,751
Inflow/(outflow)	(\$16,322)	\$8,336

Holy Cross 2024 Budget vs Actual Results



"If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday."

Isaiah 58:10-12

## DORTHY DAY HOUSE

Holy Cross serves meals at Dorothy Day House on the 4th Friday of each month. Typically, there are approximately 20 residents who need these hot meals and are grateful to receive them. Meals must be prepared at the Dorothy Day House or brought from a commercially prepared source. The Dorothy Day House back door to the kitchen opens at 4pm for cooks and servers, and meals are served at 6pm.

In addition to cooking and serving the meal, volunteers also are responsible for cleaning up and washing the dishes. If you are interested in serving, please contact Sheila Parks at 507 358-2924 or [smaparks72@gmail.com](mailto:smaparks72@gmail.com) or sign up on the Holy Cross website under CONNECT, Online Sign-ups. Thank you for serving those in need.

## CHOSEN LIFE GROUPS

Holy Cross is committed to viewing Season 4 of "The Chosen" in host homes where groups of 6 or 8+ people can watch, interact with the video, and have fellowship with one another as they draw closer to their Savior. Beginning the week of April 1, 2024, our groups will begin their schedule for the Chosen LifeGroups. This series

portrays what it could have been like to be present with Jesus on a daily basis.

If Jesus' followers were changed by their master, we should expect the same as we share in the journey of following Jesus as he sets his sights on Jerusalem.





## PROJECT CONNECT BOOKLET HIGHLIGHT

How many times have you passed by rack of booklets in the Holy Cross Welcome Center without noticing it (see picture at right)? These discipleship booklets are published by Lutheran Hour Ministries with the intention of guiding, inspiring, and educating people about many of the obstacles we encounter daily.

One of the booklets calls those daily obstacles, "the Rat Race". "Journey Through The Rat Race" is an excellent resource that applies

to all of us. It offers several exercises to help recognize the psychological and physical effects of balancing obligations to your family, job, social life, and leisure activities. It also helps one to identify the mental and physical toll of juggling the family, vocational, social, and recreational commitments. AmyRuth Bartlett, a licensed counselor, authored this booklet including the exercises that she suggests to calm the "rat race" and live a more fulfilled life.

And that booklet is just one example! May I suggest an assignment for EVERYONE? Take at least one booklet from this rack. Put it on your nightstand and search diligently for suggestions to have a more fulfilled Christian life in our "rat race" culture.

~ Ernie Freudenburg,  
HC Connecting Coordinator



## COUNCIL CORNER: HIGHLIGHTS FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Council met Tuesday February 20, 2024

**Devotions and Prayer:** Holy Cross' 2024 Focus is evangelism. Pastor Jeff shared a devotion "Passages", produced by CRU, a college ministry devoted to evangelism, connecting people to Jesus. Romans 10:1 speaks to the longing of Paul's heart and his prayer to God that the people of Israel be saved. This is a good 'heart check' for us; what do we want most for others, and what do we pray for others? Prayer is a key; ask God to give us a heart for the lost, to care about their eternal condition.

- Welcomed the new members to the 2024 EC, including Doug Happel (VP), Kevin Kelle (Lead Elder), and Denise Frey (Associate Lead Discipleship)
- Nominating Team continues to pray for the right person(s) be identified for Team Leads in Outreach, Personnel, and Volunteer Ministry. Is God niggling on your heart to share your gifts in one of these areas? (Or perhaps as a team member?) Let us know!
- HC 5-year Planning workshop (Mar. 2)
- New HC Earned Sick & Safe Time (ESST) policy, stemming from this new MN policy effective Jan. 1, 2024. The framework

offers limited pay protection when an employee (who does not have a PTO/benefits plan) might need to be absent for sickness or safe time reasons (up to 48 earned ESST hrs./year). The EC approved the HC policy. This document and the MN ESST notice will be placed in the Personnel handbook.

- Summer 2024 Revelation Life Lesson series; initial thoughts on taking the Revelation message to the community as an evangelism outreach opportunity.
- Attendance figures reported for January's worship services—Averaging 121 persons a week in person, plus online units averaged 29 worshipping via hcltv
- Updates on Churchfront training and options for Sanctuary Upgrades

**Discipleship:** LifeGroups being organized for Chosen Season 4

- Youth Servant Event planned for June 9-14 at Lutheran Valley Retreat & Summer Camp in Colorado, discussed funding - expenses, designated funds, and fund-raising for youth participants
- Connecting Hour study 'The Path to the Cross'

- Future volunteer positions catalog
- Updates to Holy Cross website
- Discipleship team hopes to host another party/game night end of May. New members to the team are Brenda Stowe (Associate Lead of Discipleship), and Shirley Sjoborg (Fellowship Team Lead).

**Outreach:** Calvary Evangelical Free Church joined the CarePortal Network; Post Bulletin article has resulted in more monetary and household donations, 15 new community responders, and one new community sponsor: Metcalf Moving & Storage

- RCLS Blue & White Night (March 22)

**Trustees:** Sanctuary ceiling repairs to occur Mar. 7, 8, 18; will meet with a structural engineer

- Changes in Library to free up space for Office and enhance the conference area
- Working on upgrading east restrooms and addition of new heat/AC in the office/conference room.

~ Jo Dean, HC Council Secretary

## March Issue of Fully Alive!

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## HOLY WEEK



## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

March 24	Palm Sunday	9:30 am
March 28	Maundy Thursday	6:30 pm
March 29	Good Friday	6:30 pm
March 31	Easter Sunday	8:00 am & 9:30 am (with livestream)

