

# Fully Alive!

COMMUNICATING AND CELEBRATING THE MISSION AND MINISTRIES OF HOLY CROSS

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## JESUS DOESN'T CHANGE

As we enter into springtime and the fluctuating weather and temperatures, I am reminded that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He never fluctuates and he never changes. He doesn't go back on his promises and he doesn't change his mind. So it might be true in the Spring to say that "if you don't like the weather, just wait five minutes and it will change", but that will never be true about Jesus. Regardless of the season that we're in and regardless of the circumstances, he will never change. It doesn't matter if it's the most beautiful day of the year or the most miserable; Jesus will be there and he won't be affected by it. Although the circumstances around us may seem unstable, Jesus himself said that there will be wars and rumors of wars, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places, yet he instructed us not to be afraid because he has overcome the world.

Since St. Patrick's Day just passed while writing this article, I am reminded that we don't always see the end of the matter in the beginning of a difficult trial. Patrick was raised as the son of a Christian official in England who provided him with a rudimentary education and train-

ing. Patrick was kidnapped around the age of 16 when their town was pillaged by raiders and he was taken as a slave from England to Ireland. For six long years he served as a slave in Ireland and worked as a shepherd for his masters. As the story goes, Patrick had an encounter with an angel that told him to return to his home. Patrick returned to England and was reunited with his family where he started studying to become a priest. Before finishing all of his schooling, he had a vivid dream where he had a letter delivered to him from the Irish people asking him to come and share the Gospel with them. Patrick convinced the church that he was called to be a missionary to Ireland, and so he began his long and arduous journey of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with his captors. It was difficult and hard, as the Irish people had little if any knowledge of the Christian faith and were bound by idol worship and traditionalism.

Patrick's first Easter seemed to change the fate of the island and its adherence to the Christian faith. Because of its ritualism, there was a religious celebration surrounding one of the false gods of Ireland in the pagan

worship from Fall to Spring, which required that only one fire was to be lit in the land on the hill of Tara. On Easter morning, Patrick lit an unauthorized fire and was brought before the King for questioning. Patrick indicated that he wasn't a threat and he was introducing the light of the world—Jesus Christ—to the Irish people. Patrick lived to share the Gospel with the Irish people, and the rest is history. Patrick's ministry lasted 29 years. He baptized over 120,000 people and established over 300 churches. The weather may change, but Christ never changes, and he is still doing the impossible and the improbable through those who dare to love their captors and share the Good News of Jesus with them.

A poem called "The Breastplate" by St. Patrick:

"Christ be within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me, Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ inquired, Christ in danger, Christ in hearts of all that love me, Christ in mouth of friend and stranger."

~ Pastor Jeff Niederstadt

## FROM THE HOLY CROSS PRESIDENT

What is worship? The well-known theologian, pastor and writer A. W. Tozar describes it as “[to] feel in our hearts and express in our own ways a humbling, delightful sense of admiring awe and astonished wonder and overwhelming love in the presence of that great mystery and unspeakable Majesty, the Ancient of Days.” Whew, that’s a mouthful! But it’s likely what the angels experience every day, maybe every minute. I think it captures a little of what the Psalmist is seeking when encouraging us to “bow down... [and] kneel before the Lord our maker” with a humble heart, in awe and wonder.

We’re pursuing a project to upgrade our Sanctuary, our primary space of corporate worship. As communicated in early March, the results of our post-Annual Meeting congregational survey expressed strong support for 3 key components of the proposed project: new lighting for the front, a second screen and new projectors, and a replacement of our aging sound system. There were varying results on other questions as shown in the following chart, though all but two had a majority positive support. There were also many comments, which are still being processed. Thanks to all who participated in the survey and provided their input.

What is our calling, our Mission here at Holy Cross? To help people Know, Live, and Share the Love of Christ! Will this project help us do this? Your Council and ministry leaders believe “yes”, with some of the following thoughts:

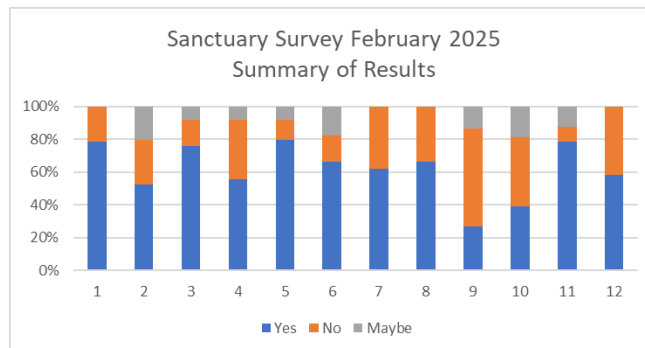
- Worship fuels our mission. Our outreach, service, and evangelism flow from our time spent glorifying God together.
- A well-equipped sanctuary helps us fulfill our purpose—to declare His greatness and invite others to encounter Him.
- Hospitality extends beyond handshakes; a welcoming space reflects the love of Christ to all who enter.

More to come, we will be back with you regarding revisions to the proposal in the near future.

**“Come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our maker.”  
Ps. 95:6**

Lastly, there are still three open positions on the Council in 2025: a Team Lead for Personnel, a Team Lead for Volunteer Ministries, and an Associate Lead for Outreach. None of these work alone; in all cases there is help available building a team or performing the function. Let me or Jo Dean know if you’re interested in learning more.

Thanks, and blessings on your Lenten preparation for the Resurrection celebration to come!



~ Mark Matthias  
Congregation President

	Question											
Response	Explain	Proceed P1	Lights	Chairs	Projectors	Electrical	Total Cost	Financing	LED Wall	Platform	Sound Sys	Mission
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Yes	78%	53%	76%	55%	80%	66%	62%	66%	27%	39%	78%	58%
No	22%	27%	16%	36%	12%	16%	38%	34%	59%	42%	9%	42%
Maybe	0%	20%	8%	8%	8%	18%	0%	0%	14%	19%	12%	0%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## CAREPORTAL UPDATE



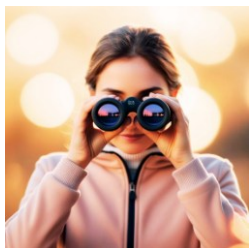
We continue to serve in amazing ways through our CarePortal Outreach Ministry! Year to date Holy Cross has met 31 re-

quests, and served 78 children for an economic impact of \$33,295! Our storage units are bursting with donations, which means we are able to bless many families needing furniture. One thing we are always needing more of is young muscles! If you are able to help with donation pickups or

CarePortal deliveries, please reach out to [denisefrey08@gmail.com](mailto:denisefrey08@gmail.com) and get on her list. A big thank you to all who are already helping in one way or another with this outreach ministry!

~ Denise Frey  
CarePortal Ambassador—Olmsted County

## BE ON THE LOOKOUT



In Matthew 13:44, Jesus recounted a parable about a man who found a treasure in a field that was too valuable to price. He had two options: steal the treasure or buy the field by selling everything he had. Jesus ends this parable with the purchase of the field because of his obedience. Moses described a similar situation in Deuteronomy 8:11-14. Moses warned the Israelites before entering the Promised Land not to forget God's commandments. Moses knew that when they prospered in the Promised Land, they would store up treasures, forget the Lord brought them out of the wilderness, and trust in themselves.

Our Promised Land and treasure is found in God's Kingdom. In the Lord's Prayer, we pray "Thy Kingdom come," but are we looking for signs? Please allow me to share a recent story of our trip to Indianapolis to cheer on our grandson who was running the mile in a national indoor track meet. Disappointments are oftentimes redirected by God into his appointments.

As he was coming out of the last turn and headed for the finish, he was bumped from behind and fell on the track. He was out of the running for the championship. What a disappointment! Nonetheless, his coaches lodged a protest, and rumors circulated that he might be granted a position to compete in the final. We encountered his coaches the following day while strolling through downtown Indianapolis. They recounted how they had to specify the

exact rule violation to protest. They also had to accompany the protest with \$50 cash which was the exact amount their wallet held. Our grandson went to the finals after the protest was granted.

We know that in God's Kingdom, we will face adversity as well as blessings. Be on the lookout for instances when adversity is turned into a blessing. Our tendency is to react quickly to adversity and not expect blessings to come from them. We should pray with the expectation that adversity will be transformed into a blessing. Consider how Jesus' arrest must have affected the disciples. The darkness persisted until that glorious Easter morning, when the priceless treasure, the "light of the world," was unable to be contained in that tomb.

~ Ernie Freudenburg

## MY THOUGHTS AFTER MARCH'S RUBY'S PANTRY DISTRIBUTION

I'll be honest—I wasn't looking forward to this month's Ruby's Pantry food distribution. Giving up a morning to stand outside in the cold, losing out on extra sleep—it wasn't exactly appealing. And I know I wasn't alone in feeling that way. **BUT** by the end of the morning, God had renewed my commitment and passion for this hard but important work.

Some of the people who drive through the Ruby's Pantry line are doing okay. They're simply making the most of their finances and have found that Ruby's Pantry is a great way to stretch their budget. Others, however, are in crisis—so much so that they don't even have the \$25 to purchase a share. That's when they receive a Blessings Share, the same amount of food, at no cost.

Certain moments from the March 8, 2025, distribution really stood out to me:

1. **The tearful gratitude.** Some people arrive at the end of the line with tears in their eyes. Life is incredibly hard for them right now, and finances are just one piece of the struggle. They are overwhelmed with thankfulness for such an abundance of food at such a small price.
2. **The unexpected prayers.** When we ask how we can pray for them, there have been some who turn around and ask how they can pray for us and for Holy Cross!
3. **The deeper struggles.** So many people carry burdens far beyond financial hardship. As they pray with our Prayer Warriors, they share heartbreaking challenges—family conflict, relational struggles, addiction, joblessness, serious health concerns, and more areas in need of Jesus' touch.
4. **The open hearts.** Some of the people we meet don't yet know Jesus, but they're willing to listen, to ask questions, and to consider Jesus.

**God IS moving powerfully through Ruby's Pantry AND CarePortal.** But we are at a critical stage in both of these ministries—past the excitement of something new and into the season that requires endurance, perseverance, and faithfulness.

If you're not already part of these life-changing ministries, **would you consider joining us?**

To sign up, visit Ruby's Pantry and CarePortal on the MINISTRIES tab at [www.holycross-church.org](http://www.holycross-church.org). Then invite a friend to serve alongside you to continue **Helping People Know, Live, and Share the Love of Christ!**

~ Cindy Wessel, Director of Worship

## ILLUMINATION STATION: GETTING TO KNOW OUR FAMILY @ HOLY CROSS SPOTLIGHT ON INTRODUCING JOSH & TRISH KELLY AND SONS!

Greetings, from the Kelly family: Josh, Trish, Bryson (7), Kyler (5), Gunnar (1)! We (Josh and Trish) met on a blind date, set up through a mutual friend in Iowa. We have been married for nine years, nearing our ten-year mark next fall. We are blessed with three beautiful and very busy boys.

Bryson, our oldest, is a 1st grader at Pine Island Elementary. He loves learning new things, playing sports, and spending time with his brothers. Kyler is in preschool at Pine Island Early Learning Center and is our true “middle child”. He loves life and never hides any emotion he may be feeling. He loves drawing and coloring, loves being active, and is a very caring little boy. Gunnar, our youngest, is in daycare and the happiest and easy-going of the three. He is starting to be very active, wanting to be on the go all of the time.

In June 2018, we relocated to Rochester, when Bryson was just three months old. Trish secured a career opportunity within special education instructional coaching for Rochester Public Schools. We originally grew up in very small towns in Iowa (Trish) and Minnesota (Josh) but have fallen in love with life in Rochester. Josh is a personal trainer and works delivery services during his spare time. Trish is now employed with Pine Island Schools, as the 5-12 Behavior Interventionist. God’s path led us to Rochester, and through colleagues led us to Holy Cross. We visited Holy Cross in Spring 2024, and instantly felt welcome and comfort. We were eager to serve in Ruby’s Pantry and learn more about CarePortal through Holy Cross. Community involvement is very important to us, and these opportunities drew us to Holy Cross.

Our family is frequently on the go. Our boys do not have any grandparents or cousins in the Rochester area. This means that we are often traveling to attend family gatherings, important events of our nieces and nephews/cousins. So, if there are any church members eager to babysit, we’re long overdue for a date night! Having a lack of family nearby can at times feel challenging, so we lean into a Bible verse that speaks to us: “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9) We know that God led us here, and He’s with us, despite any challenges that come our way, no matter where we go.



## EASTER BREAKFAST

The Easter Breakfast hosted by the Youth will be Sunday, April 20, between services from 9:15-10:15 am in the Parish Hall. People are encouraged to stay after the 8 am early service or come early and eat before the 10:30 am late service.

The Youth are organizing the breakfast to support the Youth Ministry and highlight their upcoming trip to The National Youth Gathering in New Orleans in July. There will be a free-will offering to help support them.

The menu has not yet been finalized, but rumor has it they are planning on some traditional breakfast items like pancakes, sausage, biscuits and gravy, muffins, etc.

If you or any youth in grades 7-12 are interested in helping with preparations and/or serving food, please contact Michelle at [niederstadt.michelle@mayo.edu](mailto:niederstadt.michelle@mayo.edu). Set-up and food prep will be Saturday night, April 19, from 7-9 pm and on Easter Sunday morning starting at 7 am.

Plan on joining us for delicious food and good fellowship!



## COUNCIL CORNER: HIGHLIGHTS FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

### Council met on March 18, 2025.

**Joining Jesus "Take Ten":** Council "took ten" and discussed how they saw God at work in their lives. God blesses us with encouragement through these encounters.

**Devotions and Prayer:** The 2025 Holy Cross focus is on Discipleship. Pastor Jeff shared the devotion "The Gospel of the Cross" based on Numbers 21:9. Rebellion of the wandering Israelites in the wilderness resulted in the Lord sending poisonous snakes. Through Moses, our compassionate God delivered them from this plague if they only looked at the bronze snake on a pole, created for them. This was a foreshadowing of the Cross of Jesus, for us to look at Christ's sacrifice on the Cross and in faith be delivered. God loves us so (John 3:16). He tells us in Hebrews 12:2 to look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith. There is true deliverance and joy in Jesus.

**Report from Pastor Jeff** included that the Marriage course is going well; eleven couples are participating. He is grateful for Ken and Lousette Schultz who are serving dinners each Sunday evening for this group study. The Tikkun Purim celebration was well attended. The National Youth Gathering "Endure," in New Orleans, will be chaperoned by Dan Kuball. He will accompany a small group from HC the week of July 18-24.

**Finance:** Please see Treasurer's report in this newsletter.

**Elders:** Attendance figures reported for worship services in January: an average of 133 in-person weekly. The online units worshiping via hclc.tv in February averaged 27. Etta Koppenhaver was baptized on Feb. 2, and Pastor Greg Finke (Joining Jesus) gave the Life Lesson on Feb. 23.

**Discipleship:** Creative Women's Gathering saw 14 ladies from MNATC and 6 from HC; there were good conversations at each table during craft time. Saints Alive held a potluck & games on Mar. 14. Watch for details about a Game Night for ALL (May 2).

**Outreach:** Ruby's Pantry Distribution for March: 299 shares /230 vehicles. In February, HC members met 14 requests through CarePortal serving 37 children and 18 adults. Currently there are 16 unmet requests.

**Trustees:** The Trustees will be moving forward with the improvement of the Welcome Center as presented by Outreach and approved by Discipleship and Staff.

**Sanctuary Project – Building for Eternity:** Cindy shared a document she and Sandy worked on to help address the questions and comments raised by the congregation concerning the Sanctuary project. This document provides background, details

and definitions to communicate reasons for the breakdown/pieces comprising the potential plans. This includes Scripture reference, Lighting, Seating, Screen & Projector, Sound System, Installation -Labor & Integration, Cost Estimates, and tie-in to the Vision at Holy Cross. The council discussed this document at length. This works-in-progress info document will be shared with the congregation and friends of Holy Cross when completed.

**RCLS:** HC Council shared feedback on the proposed changes to the RCLS Bylaws. Once the RCLS BOD has finalized their Bylaws, they will send out a formal request to each Association Church /Council to present these RCLS Bylaws to their Congregation for approval. The Principal Call Committee will continue to meet and review resumes in hopes of finding another candidate prior to the end of the school year. Final repairs resulting from the January frozen pipe incident will occur over spring break. The board continues to meet with LCEF on potential school building improvements.

**The Trustees' Handbook**, reviewed biannually, was approved by Council.

*~ Jo Dean, Holy Cross Council Secretary*

## KIDZ ALIVE: GOD GIVES US JOY!

The Desert Hare, Jet, has been helping Kidz Alive memorize and understand Philipians 4:4 - "Always be full of JOY in the Lord. I say it again - rejoice!"

To learn this, Kidz Alive children (or kidz!) have been studying "Letters from Leaders" on Sunday mornings, including portions of Paul's letters to the churches in Galatia, Rome, and Philippi, and James' letter to all Jewish Christians who were scattered.

Kidz Alive have learned that:

God gives us JOY... when we solve problems together.

God gives us JOY... when we don't give up.

God gives us JOY... always (Always is a lot. That's every second of every minute of every hour of every day of every year!).

God gives us JOY... when we don't know what to do.

Kidz Alive have been JOYFULLY praising God in song as they prepare to lead the congregation in worship of God on Palm Sunday, April 13.

Please keep Kidz Alive in your prayers, that God's Truth is rooted deep in their hearts and minds as they are Helping People Know, Live, and Share the Love of Christ.

**TIKKUN JEWISH-CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**

**Tikkun** תיקון

We thank Holy Cross for hosting our weekly meetings! Our goal is to facilitate healing between Christians and Jews through a time of worship, learning (children’s lesson included), sharing current events affecting the Jewish people, and prayer. We wrap up our meetings with food and fellowship. Please join us Saturdays from 4-6 pm!

For more info visit:  
[www.tikkunfellowship.com](http://www.tikkunfellowship.com) or  
 email [info@tikkunfellowship.com](mailto:info@tikkunfellowship.com)



**Purim Party!**

On Saturday, March 15, Tikkun had its first gathering in the Holy Cross Parish Hall. Attendees enjoyed dressing in costume to hear the lively and interactive reading of the book of Esther. The party ended with a feast celebrating God’s deliverance of the Jewish people, as Esther’s cousin, Mordechai, commanded the Jews (Esther 9:20 -22). Esther’s bravery to advocate for her

people inspires us Christians to stand up for the Jewish people as well. Reflecting on Haman’s plot to destroy all the Jews under Persia’s (modern day Iran’s) rule many years ago seems to eerily parallel Hamas’ mission to annihilate God’s chosen people today. Perhaps God is calling you to courageously stand for His people “at such a time as this”.



“For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”  
 Esther 4:14

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: "LIVE IT OUT" A CAMP-INSPIRED ADVENTURE**

Get ready for a week of adventure at Holy Cross' summer Vacation Bible School! Holy Cross will help kids "LIVE IT OUT" through exciting camp adventures that will inspire kids ages 3 years old through 5th grade to live out their faith every day. Each day will emphasize living out God's love in everything they do, as they learn to put their faith into action while making lasting memories.

Mark your calendars: VBS will take place from Monday, July 28 through Friday, August 1, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Be on the lookout for camper and leader registration!

What children do you know who you can invite to join the camp adventure? Invite them now! We are also calling on all volunteers to help make this a memorable experience!



**RCLS UPDATE**



The RCLS Theater delivered a spectacular performance of Annie, Jr to sold out audiences. We were blessed by the span of sweet voices of our youngest kindergarten performers to the mature voices of our middle school actors and actresses. Thank you to Mrs. Schauer, Mr. Kuball,, and all the patrons of the RCLS Theater for making the school drama program a smashing success.

The kindergarten recently celebrated their first 100 days of school! What a milestone these young scholars have reached. To celebrate, students each created a collection of 100 items and had fun sharing, counting, and grouping their collections.



Our middle school students celebrated National Science Day with the aide of some engineers from IBM. Students had fun engineering and building mini roller coasters out of everyday materials. A few weeks later they were also able to celebrate National “Pi” Day, the annual celebration of the mathematical constant  $\pi$ , with the aide of many parent bakers!

Save the date for VIP Days! Given our large student body, VIP Day will be split between the lower and upper grades this year. The upper grades will host their VIPs on the afternoon of Thursday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, and the younger grades will host their VIPs on the morning of Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, followed by early dismissal.

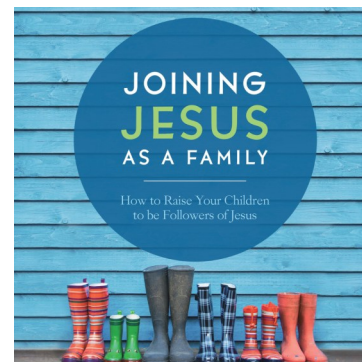
~ Laura Rhee, Holy Cross Rep for RCLS



**JOINING JESUS CONTINUED**

Jesus continues to encourage us and equip us for sharing Jesus with those around us and help us learn and grow in the concept of discipling. Our latest effort as a church to equip the saints and to build up the body of believers at Holy Cross through discipleship has been in our Fridays In Lent Series – Joining Jesus As A Family. Through this study we have learned

how to effectively disciple our children and seen how it is applicable to every relationship in our life. By the time you get this newsletter there may still be time to attend! Our last two Fridays In Lent events are 04/04 and 04/11. Bring a dish to share and hear the Good News about sharing the Gospel with your family and friends.



## April Issue of Fully Alive!

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## JESUS:

From the Beginning to the End

### Worship during Holy Week

PALM SUNDAY  
APRIL 13 @ 9:30 AM

MAUNDY THURSDAY  
APRIL 17 @ 6:30 PM

GOOD FRIDAY  
APRIL 18 @ 6:30 PM

**EASTER SUNDAY**  
**APRIL 20 @ 8 AM & 10:30 AM**

BREAKFAST  
9:15 - 10:15 AM

