



# Fully Alive!

COMMUNICATING AND CELEBRATING THE MISSION AND MINISTRIES OF HOLY CROSS

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## THE WORLD IS IN NEED OF JESUS

The church is about helping people have right relationships with God. This certainly happens in a church building, but it also needs to happen outside the walls. Church attendance cannot be the only goal.

Already in Genesis 3:9 we see God's desire to rebuild the broken relationship with humanity. He comes looking for Adam and Eve who were hiding because of their sin. He calls out to them, "Where are you?" Matthew 15 points to God's mission to reclaim the hearts of mankind for a right relationship with Him. Jesus quotes Isaiah, saying, "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Matthew 15:8).

God's mission is the salvation of all. His story of salvation includes the sending of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and now us. Jesus says, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you" (John 20:21). In all of this, we see the rebuilding of a relationship between God and mankind. If salvation is for all, it is likely that we will need to go out to the highways and byways to find people (Luke 14:23).

Apart from Jonah, the Old Testament paradigm was centripetal—

a drawing in to Israel. In the New Testament we see the church being sent out. This centrifugal movement is on display in the work of Paul. Paul's going was not easy. He was stoned and run out of town on more than one instance. He even found himself out of control in cultures where he did not understand clearly what was going on, but on he went into a world hostile to Christ.

Jesus told Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." He had already told his disciples that we will be hated by the world (Matthew 10:22-24). Former Wheaton College president, Duane Litfin, observed that "The Christian church is no longer playing for the home team. Society is no longer rooting for the church to win." In that case, do we even want to cross our church property lines where we don't control the scenarios? Yes! We do so to point people to a relationship with Christ.

This reality of the world's reaction to Christianity should not make us yearn for the "good old days" nor to circle the wagons around our churches. This is a time for the church to get off campus and engage as never before. The world needs a Chris-

tian people that serve it. It needs the love of God in all its forms. We live in an America where only 45 percent of the population attends church monthly or more and 40 percent of millennials have ticked the "none" box. When Jesus "saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36). We pray for the Spirit to move us with the same compassion.

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**The church is about helping people have right relationships with God. This certainly happens *in* a church building, but it also needs to happen *outside* the walls.**

**LIFEGROUPS: BE WATCHFUL, STAND FIRM, LOVE ALWAYS**



Through worship and the sacraments, Bible study and service initiatives, and our Chosen LifeGroups we connect with one another as the Body of Christ. We are united by the Holy Spirit, who has also bestowed upon us all the necessary gifts to influence our community for the gospel. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul ends by urging them to do everything in love.

1 Corinthians 16:13-14, "Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like strong men. Let all that you do be done in love."

We usually don't think of acting like strong men and doing everything love at the same time. How is this possible? To put Jesus' love into our daily lives, we, as God's chosen people, will draw strength from the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and one another. For example, here are some quotes from par-

ticipants in our Chosen LifeGroups that are meeting this fall to **Share Life Together**:

"Our group is a safe place to talk about our struggles."

"Our wonderful discussions are so rich."

"When you think the world is falling apart, it is just falling into place."

"I feel so grateful that I am learning so much from these episodes."

Stand firm. Be strong. Do everything in love.

This takes work, planning, and practice. Invite God to be your strength, and bring everything to Him in prayer, praise and thanksgiving.

~ Ernie Freudenburg,  
HC Connecting Coordinator

**KIDZ ALIVE UPDATE**

The children of Holy Cross have been busy studying Elisha from the Old Testament to learn about God's kindness.

The truths they've learned include:

- God is kind... so let's rely on Him!
- God is kind... so we watch for His surprises!

- God is kind... so let's care for others!
- God is kind... so let's believe He'll help us!

See photos of the children painting pumpkins on Sunday, October 20, while they sang praises to Jesus. Kidz Alive helped the congregation worship God in the Choir of All Ages for worship on Reformation Sun-

day, October 27. That same day in Connecting Hour, they began learning Christmas songs to offer with the Youth in worship on Sunday, December 22, as part of the musical "Heaven and Nature Sing".

Please pray for the Kidz Alive team, children, and families to be **Helping People Know, Live, and Share the Love of Christ**.

~ Cindy Wessel, Director of Worship



## KIDZ ALIVE AND YOUTH NOW CHRISTMAS!

Join the children and youth of Holy Cross on Sunday, December 22, as they share the story of Christmas through the program, "Heaven and Nature Sing." "Heaven and Nature Sing" combines worshipful narration, Bible readings, drama sketches, and singing to create a fresh and joyful examination of the birth of our Savior.

**Come as You Are** to celebrate with us during 9:30 am worship that Sunday.



## JOINING JESUS CONTINUED

Mark your calendars now for the Joining Jesus Conference at Holy Cross in February. Guest speaker and author Greg Finke will be joining us the weekend of February 21-23, 2025.

We are looking forward to reviewing the Joining Jesus process and getting motivated to connect with neighbors, friends, and coworkers and join Jesus with what He is doing in their lives.

Also, our last Zoom training call for Joining Jesus will be Wednesday, November 27, at 1 pm. Everyone is welcome to join to learn more about connecting ourselves and others to Jesus.

*"In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps."*  
(Proverbs 16:9)



## "TOWDAH" ON THANKSGIVING EVE!

Many Hebrew words are translated as "praise" in English, but each one has its own unique meaning. The word תודה (Towdah) is often translated as a "thank offering". It means, "to extend the hand in adoration, avowal, or acceptance." TOWDAH is thanksgiving. A confession. A sacrifice of praise. Get this: it's thanksgiving both for thanking God for things not yet received, as well as things you are ready have.

For what are you thankful? For what are you trusting God to provide for His glory and the building up of His Kingdom? Come extend your hand to God in adoration and with gratefulness for these things—come TOWDAH—on Thanksgiving Eve, Wednesday, November 27, at 6:30 pm!

And the "sacrifice of praise" part? Praise God by bringing a "sacrifice" of non-perishable food items that will be donated to a local food bank.

*"Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."*  
(Hebrews 13:15-16)

**"Rejoice always, pray continually, GIVE THANKS in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."**

**1 Thessalonians  
5:16-18**

ILLUMINATION STATION: GETTING TO KNOW OUR FAMILY @ HOLY CROSS

INTRODUCING THE ACTON FAMILY!

Dan and Jenna were both raised in Geneva, IL. Dan, born in Elmhurst, was baptized and confirmed at St. Mark's Lutheran church in St. Charles, IL. Jenna, whose grandparents still live in Geneva, was baptized in her mom's Catholic church and confirmed at Rejoice Lutheran church. Summer after 8th grade, while riding bicycle with a friend, Dan jumped at the opportunity to enjoy a trampoline...which happened to be at Jenna's house, their first meeting. They enjoyed larger friend groups in high school and spent time together on the track team as pole vaulters. "We stayed very close after leaving for college even though I went to Iowa State and Jenna attended St. Louis University. We finally began dating beginning of our junior year, and I proposed shortly after I graduated-the week before I moved to Las Vegas, NV to start work. Jenna joined me after finishing her Master's degree. We were married back home in Illinois in 2019." Although they enjoyed time in Las Vegas, they accepted an opportunity at Mayo Rochester. "It was an interesting experience looking for a place to live during nation-wide lockdowns. We had our first child in 2021 and drove home to have him baptized because we had not yet joined a church family here. After finding out we were expecting our second (and third) child we decided to finally make the effort to find a church family. Holy Cross was the second LCMS congregation we visited. Pastor Jordan called the children forward for the children's message and we loved seeing how many young kids were present. We were also happy to learn that the Engelmann family were members, as Dan and Jason work together and are friends." Dan works in technical medical sales at Mayo Clinic, on behalf of Abbott, supporting electrophysiology procedures within cardiology. Jenna has recently devoted herself to raising their children full-time. Before the girls were born, she worked at Olmsted Medical Center's Sports Medicine clinic as a Clinical Athletic Trainer. "I helped people find the cause of their pain and assisted our physician in treating those injuries. Now in my role as mom I love getting everyone outside as often as possible, finding new ways to make healthy food taste good, and sharing the highs and lows of parenting with other young families." Their son Pearson started preschool; his current obsession is the story of David and Goliath via Veggie Tales. Jane (Baby A) is learning to walk, crawling fast to follow big brother. Nora (Baby B) is more content to sit, play, chatter and smile. Dan enjoys fishing and the MN Sportsman's Club. Jenna runs, cycles, and reads when time allows. They both love trying new restaurants and watching football. Dan leans often on his Confirmation verse, Psalm 55:22. Jenna added, "Most recently I look to Psalms 139:14-16, as I marvel at our beautiful children. As the kids grow up, we have every intention of not only volunteering but also bringing the kids along to teach them early on how to give back in service."



RCLS HALLELUJAH CARNIVAL 2024

Thanks to the over twenty individuals from Holy Cross who joined people from our sister association congregations to **Serve Others** in the 2024 RCLS Hallelujah Carni-

val on October 26 by donating product and helping with set up, ticket sales, and running of activities!



## APPLE OF HIS EYE RECAP

*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” (Romans 1:16)*

What do you think of Jesus? For Steve Cohen, someone raised in a nominally Reformed Jewish home, Jesus was a Gentile god and Jews don't believe in Jesus. This understanding of Jesus is common among the Jewish community, even though Jesus himself and the first Christians were Jewish! So, how did Mr. Cohen, the evangelist who joined us for a weekend-long Evangelism Seminar, change his mind?

Our Friday night session began with the lighting of Shabbat candles and blessing the One who brings forth bread from the

earth (challah loaf) and creates fruit of the vine (grape juice). Mr. Cohen then shared his testimony of how a Lutheran friend faithfully suggested that he read the New Testament. Eventually, Steve did, which led to a series of events whereby he finally gave his life to Jesus. But this would not have been possible had his friend remained silent.

“What keeps you from sharing the Gospel?” Steve asked. Seminar attendees shared a variety of responses: Fear. Complacency. Insecurity. Timing. Location. Not sure how to articulate it.

Steve invited attendees to recite the Apostle's Creed (which everyone did by heart). Essentially, if someone knows this

and can ask the question “What do you think of Jesus?”, then they are sufficiently equipped to begin to share the Gospel with anyone around them. Anyone: a clerk at the grocery store, a random sales caller, a co-worker, a neighbor, or a stranger on the street.

After the Saturday session, attendees had the opportunity to put Steve's instruction into practice at the local farmer's market. One of the conversations led to a man receiving a copy of the Bible.

So, do you know what the person next to you thinks of Jesus? If not, why not try asking them? In doing so, it opens up space for others to **Grow in God's Word** and be transformed by the truth of Jesus.



## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OVERVIEW

*“It was he [Christ] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” (Ephesians 4:11-12)*

At this time of year, we begin planning for the coming year, 2025. I'd like to give you an overview of what this means for the Executive Council. Hopefully you're familiar with the “Council Corner” in our monthly Fully Alive newsletters, which outlines much of the Council's ongoing work.

The Executive Council (“the Council”) is responsible to “coordinate and provide leadership and direction for the ministries of the congregation in order to achieve its

Mission and Vision.” This charge, from our bylaws, means we plan and provide leadership in carrying out our ministries, with our eyes on the Mission of **Helping People Know, Live and Share the Love of Christ**, and Vision, which we summarize as [Showing] **God's Love in Action**.

We meet monthly to discuss the Ministry Plan, which outlines the activities of focus for the current year. This can include efforts in our various Ministry Domains, such as in Discipleship (welcome, fellowship, education) and Outreach (going beyond our walls) to Stewardship (caring for our resources like staff and facilities). We hear about current events, help decide on direction in areas of debate, and act on behalf

of the congregation in operational and business matters.

Fun? It's a blessing to be close to the work of this congregation. I'd say that's a great benefit. God has greatly blessed us! There are so many areas of opportunity!

Have you ever considered being part of the Council? Those on it are people like you—having a heart for Jesus, for his people, and for our mission. Please consider whether this might be your calling. At this time we have openings in leadership of Personnel, Outreach and Volunteer Ministries. Please see Mark Matthias or Jo Dean with any questions or interest.

~ Mark Matthias, HC President

## RUBY'S PANTRY UPDATE



*"Blessed are those who are generous, because they feed the poor." (Proverbs 22:9)*

Ruby's Pantry food distribution in October saw 232 cars drive through our parking lot where we distributed 385 shares, including 13 blessing shares we provide when a



family has no money. The resulting Holy Cross share from the distribution was \$929.50, which gets transferred into our CarePortal fund where we invest in our community and help even more people in need!

Thank you to all the volunteers and the leadership team who **Serve Others** by making Ruby's Pantry happen each month. You are very much appreciated in our community! We couldn't offer this amazing ministry without each one of you! God is blessing many lives through your good and faithful service.

~Denise Frey, HC Outreach Team

## COUNCIL CORNER: HIGHLIGHTS FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Council met Tuesday: October 15, 2024

**Joining Jesus "Take Ten":** Discussion regarding what we see God doing in our lives and the lives of the people around us, and how we follow God's leading.

**Devotions and Prayer:** Keeping with the 2024 Holy Cross focus of Evangelism, Pastor Jeff shared the devotion "The Ultimate Question" based on Mark 8:29. When asked, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter answered Jesus, "You are the Messiah." The ultimate question to ask ourselves and others is, "What do you think about Jesus?"

**Discipleship:** Highlighted Creative Women's Gatherings, Welcome Team greeters, and plans for a New Year's Eve party in the Fellowship Hall.

**Outreach Ministry:** CarePortal network has served 1,472 children in Olmsted Country since February 2021 launch. Holy Cross members met 47% of September's requests. Currently there are 15 unmet requests. October's Ruby's Pop-up Pantry

distributed 385 shares (including 13.2 Blessings Shares); 232 vehicles drove through.

**Elders:** Attendance figures reported for worship services in September: an average of 123 in person weekly; online units worshipping via hclc.tv averaged 22.

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

**Trustees:** Highlighted north parking lot repair completed; courtyard being aerated/seeded and trees to be trimmed; roof maintenance to include removing leaf debris and pressure washing the flat roof.

**RCLS:** The same Principal call committee, from Spring/Summer 2024, has begun meeting again. 61 children are attending pre-kindergarten. The Facility manager is obtaining elevator upgrade quotes, and is rebidding the school maintenance contract.

**Sanctuary Renovation Updates:** Cindy presented info details on lighting, display equipment, platform, chairs, and integra-

tion materials. This included cost projections and potential future considerations. For more info, see article in this newsletter.

**Business and Motions:** The 2024 Ministry Plan was briefly reviewed; objectives will be evaluated at next month's meeting. Sanctuary and/or Future Projects at Holy Cross - Council approved up to \$13,000 to have an electrical study performed, Olmsted County requires this capacity evaluation.

**Staffing:** Council authorized leadership to pursue hiring a part-time worship leader position to work less than 20 hours/week. This was considered an immediate need to enable Cindy Wessel to support the Kidz Alive program, a vital part of Children's Ministry. Staffing options will continue to be evaluated.

~ Jo Dean, HC Council Secretary

**RCLS UPDATE**

The students of RCLS were very busy and productive the first quarter of the school year! In addition to working diligently on their academics, RCLS has some excellent actors whose skills were on display during the recent play, *Jolly Roger and the Pirate Queen*.



The soccer teams and cross-country teams had excellent seasons. Several members of the cross-country team will represent RCLS at nationals on Saturday, October 26. Good luck Bobcats!

The volleyball season has commenced! Games will be held in October and November and will conclude with the conference volleyball tournament on Saturday, November 16!



The Lego Robotics team has also been hard at work. Lego Robotics allows students to build different types of robots to solve specific challenges using skills in science, math, technology and engineering. Students then have the opportunity to compete in December in the IBM Lego Education Outreach competition.

~ Laura Rhee, Holy Cross Rep for RCLS

**TREASURER REPORT**

September General Fund receipts were \$57,180, General fund expenses were \$58,858, or \$1,678 more than receipts. A single notable expense was \$7,500 for parking lot seal coating and re-striping. This is done about every three years, and the total bill was \$15,954, with \$7,454 paid by savings in designated. Absent this, September would have been a surplus.

\$89,754 on roofing (\$51,741 from Raise the Roof funding), plus \$43,818 on insulation, for a total of \$133,572 on the project. These were significant, but less than initial estimates. Praise God for providing the resources to keep our space in condition bringing glory to God, and welcoming to new guests.

On designated we received \$12,617 in, with additional \$6,871 coming in on Raise the Roof (\$51,741 year-to-date, and I expect about \$1,300 more through December) and \$2,200 for Keyboard replacement.

Parking lot seal coating was \$7,454 from savings, and additionally we had small amounts go out on other designated accounts.

Designated spending totaled \$144,976 with the following large projects We spent

Ruby Pantry receipts were\$ 9,508 and expense was \$8,652 for a surplus available to Care Portal. Care Portal offering in was \$50 and expenses were \$1,873.

~ Roger Lindahl, HC Treasurer



## November Issue of Fully Alive!

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# Waiting Here For You

*An Advent Journey of Hope*

## **WORSHIP ON THANKSGIVING EVE:**

NOVEMBER 27 at 6:30 pm

## **WORSHIP IN ADVENT:**

DECEMBER 4, 11, 18 at 6:30 pm

# Christmas Eve Candlelight

**DECEMBER 24**

**4:30 PM**

**6:00 PM**

## The Name of Jesus