

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

School and Early Learning Center



December 24, 2023

Advent 4: A Service of Readings and Carols

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WELCOME TO HOLY CROSS!

OUR SAVIOR WELCOMES YOU AND SO DO WE! Whether you are a first time visitor or returning guest, we are delighted to share our worship with you! Please come back and worship with us again!

PARENTS OF LITTLE ONES We love to have children in worship! However, parents who find a need to take their children out of the service are welcome to use the narthex/lobby area while you quiet your little one. The infant care room is also available for nursing mothers. You'll be able to hear the service from the speaker system in the narthex and in the infant care room. A changing table is in the men's and women's bathrooms. If needed, please ask an usher for assistance.

REGISTRATION CARDS are in the hymnal racks. Guests may use the registration cards to let us know how we may further assist you. We encourage all members and guests to fill out a registration card and place it in the offering plate. Thank you!

A HEARING LOOP is installed in our sanctuary for your convenience. If your hearing aid has a t-switch, you'll need to activate it when you're in the sanctuary, in order to benefit from the hearing loop.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES Holy Cross offers a full Christian elementary school (grades PreK3 – 8), Kids Crossing Early Learning Center (6 weeks – 5 years), Sunday School and children's youth activities.

PRAYER CONCERNS? Contact Sherri Bartels, sbbartels.sb@gmail.com. Our prayer chain is a large group of Holy Cross members who join you in calling upon God with your prayer concerns. Galatians 6:2 says "Carry each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

USHERS are on duty during church services. Please speak with them if you need assistance.

LIVE STREAM WORSHIP If you or a loved one are unable to attend worship, our 8:30 am service is live streamed on the church website.

PHONE-IN WORSHIP Sundays at 8:30 a.m. (Call any time after 8:20 a.m.; dial 1 (978) 990-5164 followed by access code 6279900#)

ON DEMAND WORSHIP View or listen to any of our past worship services by visiting our website and click the tab labeled Live Stream/Sermons and click sermons.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE Sunday, 8:30 am 10:30 am and Monday, 6:30 pm.

TRANSPORTATION FUND If you have no other way to church, taxi rides to and from church are available. Please speak with the Pastor or call the church office at 249-3101.

THE LORD'S SUPPER is offered on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month and the following Mondays. We believe the Lord's Supper is an expression of our unity of faith in our Savior as well as our unity in all scriptural teachings. Since the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod profess full unity in biblical teaching, members of these church bodies are welcome to commune with us. If you are a member of a different Christian church, we ask that you wait to commune until you have closely examined what we teach and are convinced that we are a church that preaches the true Word of God, and that you are in agreement with our teachings. Please speak with a pastor if you are a guest and would like to commune.

MISSION STATEMENT The mission of Holy Cross Lutheran Church and School is to bring the Gospel of Christ to our community through the Means of Grace, reaching out to the lost, and nurturing our fellow believers. This we do through worship, education, service and fellowship that God's kingdom may grow.

A Service of Readings and Carols

December 24, 2023

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Prophecies surrounding Jesus' birth and their fulfillment

Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle: The Angel's Candle

So that Scripture would be fulfilled...

The Old Testament is filled with prophecies about the Savior. Many of these prophecies were fulfilled during the circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth. The fulfillment of each and every one of these prophecies is intended:

- to show that the author of the entire Bible is God: what he prophecies will happen and,
- to identify Jesus of Nazareth as the Savior who was foretold, and
- to show that God determined and set his heart to save us by sending own Son.

After rising from the dead, Jesus said to his disciples in Luke 24:44-45 "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.' Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures."

On this morning of Christmas Eve, let us ponder the Old Testament prophecies which were fulfilled during the time surrounding Jesus' birth.

The very first Gospel promise... that a child born of a woman would crush Satan's head.

Prophecy

Pastor Bartels:

Genesis 3:15 [To the serpent God said,] I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will crush his heel.

Fulfillment: The seed of a woman:

Congregation:

Galatians 4:44 But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son to be born of a woman, so that he would be born under the law, 5 in order to redeem those under the law, so that we would be adopted as sons.

Fulfillment: Destroy the power of the devil:

Pastor Van Kampen:

Hebrews 2:14 Therefore, since the children share flesh and blood, he also shared the same flesh and blood, so that through death he could destroy the one who had the power of death that is, the Devil

Hymn #28 (vs 1, 5)....."Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord"

1 Let the earth now praise the Lord,
Who has truly kept his word
And at last to us did send
Christ, the sinner's help and friend.

5 Crush for me the serpent's head
That, set free from doubt and dread,
I may cling to you in faith,
Safely kept through life and death,

Genealogy

Prophecy - Descendant of Abraham

Pastor Bartels:

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD said to Abram..." 2 I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. You will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse anyone who dishonors you. All of the families of the earth will be blessed in you."

Prophecy - Descendant of Isaac

Pastor Van Kampen:

Genesis 26:2-4 The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, "...I will be with you and will bless you... and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. 4 I will multiply your descendants like the stars of the sky and will give all these lands to your descendants. In your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed."

Prophecy - Descendant of Jacob

Congregation:

Numbers 24:17 I see him, but not now. I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob. A scepter will rise up out of Israel.

Prophecy - Descendant of Judah

Pastor Bartels:

Genesis 49:10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until the one to whom it belongs comes. He will receive the obedience of the peoples.

Prophecy - Descendant of Jesse

Pastor Van Kampen:

Isaiah 11:1-2 A shoot will spring up from the stump of Jesse, and a Branch from his roots will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

Prophecy - Descendant of David

Congregation:

Isaiah 9:7 There will be no limit to his authority and no end to the peace he brings. He will rule on David's throne and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from now on, into eternity. The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this.

Fulfillment

Pastor Bartels:

Matthew 1:1-16 (selected verses) A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac was the father of Jacob. Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers... (skip 7 generations)... 5 Obed was the father of Jesse. 6 Jesse was the father of King David...(skip 24 generations)... 16 Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, from whom Jesus was born (who is called Christ).

Hymn #23 (vs 2, 4)....."Oh Come, Oh Come Emmanuel"

2 Oh, come, O Root of Jesse, free
Your own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell your people save,
And bring them vict'ry o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

4 Oh, come, O Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home.
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel!

To be born in Bethlehem

Prophecy

Pastor Bartels:

Micah 5:2 But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, from you, will go out the one who will be the ruler for me in Israel. His goings forth are from the beginning, from the days of eternity

Fulfillment

Pastor Van Kampen:

Luke 2:1-5 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governing Syria. 3 And everyone went to register, each to his own town. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the town of Nazareth, into Judea, to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was from the house and family line of David. 5 He went to be registered with Mary, his wife, who was pledged to him in marriage and was expecting a child.

Hymn #65 (vs 1, 4)....."O Little Town of Bethlehem"

1 O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep And dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light.
The hopes and fears Of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

4 O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin And enter in;
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
Oh, come to us, Abide with us,
Our Lord Immanuel!

To be born of a virgin

Prophecy

Pastor Bartels:

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give a sign for all of you. Behold! The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and name him Immanuel

Fulfillment

Congregation:

Matthew 1:18-23 18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. His mother, Mary, was pledged in marriage to Joseph. Before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. 19 Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her. So he decided to divorce her privately. 20 But as he was considering these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 23 "Look, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son. And they will name him Immanuel," which means, "God with us."

Hymn #24 (vs 1, 2)....."The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"

1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
"All hail," said he to meek and lowly Mary,
"Most highly favored maiden." Gloria!

2 "I come from heav'n to tell the Lord's decree:
A blessed virgin mother you shall be.
Your Son shall be Immanuel, by seers foretold,
"Most highly favored maiden." Gloria!

Called out of Egypt

Prophecy

Pastor Bartels:

Hosea 11:1 Out of Egypt I called my son

Fulfillment

Congregation:

Matthew 2:13-15 13 After the Wise Men were gone, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to Joseph in a dream. He said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, because Herod will search for the child in order to kill him." 14 Joseph got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and left for Egypt. 15 He stayed there until the death of Herod. This happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

Hymn #552 (vs 8)....."By All Your Saints Still Striving"
(to the tune of hymn #19)

8 All praise, O God, for Joseph,
The guardian of your Son,
Who saved him from King Herod
When safety there was none
He taught the trade of builder
When they to Naz'reth came;
And Joseph's love as father
Blessed God the Father's name.

Slaughter of the innocents

Prophecy

Pastor Bartels:

Jeremiah 31:15 This is what the LORD says. A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning. Rachel is weeping for her children. She refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.

Fulfillment

Pastor Van Kampen:

Matthew 2:16-18 16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Wise Men, he was furious. He issued orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and in all the surrounding countryside, from two years old and under. This was in keeping with the exact time he had learned from the Wise Men. 17 Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: 18 A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and she refused to be comforted, because they are no more

Hymn #552 (vs 27)....."By All Your Saints Still Striving"
(to the tune of hymn #19)

Praise for your infant martyrs,
Whom your mysterious love
Called early from life's conflicts
To share your peace above.
O Rachel, cease your weeping;
They're free from pain and cares.
Lord, grant us crowns as brilliant
And faith as sure as theirs.

The return of Elijah before the coming of Christ

Prophecy

Pastor Bartels:

Malachi 4:5-6 Look! I am going to send Elijah the prophet to you before the great and fearful day of the LORD comes! 6 He will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with complete destruction.

Fulfillment

Congregation:

Luke 1:11-17 11 An angel of the Lord appeared to [Zechariah], standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and overcome by fear. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear a son for you, and you are to name him John. 14 You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, 15 because he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to drink wine or beer. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. 16 He will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. 17 He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, to turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to prepare a people who are ready for the Lord."

Hymn #20 (vs 1, 2)....."When All the World Was Cursed"

1 When all the world was cursed
By Moses' condemnation,
Saint John the Baptist came
With words of consolation.
With true forerunner's zeal
The greater one he named,
And him, as yet unknown,
As Savior he proclaimed

2 Before Saint John was born,
He leaped in joyful meeting,
Confessing him as Lord
Whose mother he was greeting.
By Jordan's rolling stream.
A new Elijah bold,
He testified of him
Whom prophets had foretold

A forerunner will prepare the way

Prophecy

Pastor Bartels:

Isaiah 40:1-5 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call out to her. Her warfare really is over. Her guilt is fully paid for. Yes, she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. 3 A voice is calling out: In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD. In the wasteland make a level highway for our God. 4 Every valley will be raised up, and every mountain and hill will be made low. The rugged ground will become level, and the rough places will become a plain. 5 Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all flesh together will see it. Yes, the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Fulfillment

Pastor Van Kampen:

Matthew 3:1-3 In those days, John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, 2 "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven is near!" 3 Yes, this is he of whom this was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: A voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord. Make his paths straight."

Hymn #27 (vs 1, 3)....."O Jesus, Lamb of God You Are"
(to the tune of hymn #5)

1 O Jesus, Lamb of God, you are
My comfort and my guiding star;
I come, a sinner, trustingly
And bring my many sins with me.

3 Saint John the Baptist points to you
And bids me cast my sin on you,
For you have left your throne on high
To suffer for the world and die.

Offering

The Prince of Peace would be born for us

Prophecy

Pastor Bartels:

Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born. To us a son is given. The authority to rule will rest on his shoulders. He will be named: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Fulfillment

Congregation:

Luke 2:10-14 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. For behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all people: 11 Today in the town of David, a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." 13 Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude from the heavenly army, praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward mankind."

Hymn #54 (vs 1, 3)....."Where Shepherds Lately Knelt"

1 Where shepherds lately knelt and kept the angel's word,
I come in half-belief, a pilgrim strangely stirred;
But there is room and welcome there for me,
But there is room and welcome there for me.

3 How should I not have known Isaiah would be there,
His prophecies fulfilled? With pounding heart I stare:
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me,
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me.

Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Take away the burden of our sins and make us ready for the celebration of your birth, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.



C: A - men. A - men. A - men.

Closing Verses #21 (vs 2, 3)....."Hosanna to the Coming Lord"

2 O Savior, with protecting care
Abide in this your house of prayer,
Where we your parting promise claim,
Assembled in your sacred name.

3 O Advent King, our sins forgive;
Come in our lives and hearts to live,
And let our humble souls become
A temple worthy of your name.

Announcements If you attended online services at Holy Cross, please send an email to frontoffice@holycrossmadison.org, and in the subject line write "Attended" and after that the number of people who watched from your home.

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Holy Cross News & Notes

December 24, 2023

Calendar for the Week – December 24 - December 31

Monday

- Christmas Day Worship - 9:00 am

Sunday (New Year's Eve)

- New Year's Eve Worship - 9:00 am (individual absolution)

NO WORSHIP MONDAY, JANUARY 1, 2024

Please pray for our homebound and for those in nursing homes.

FOR ONLINE GIVERS: ONLINE GIVING PAGE UPDATE

Holy Cross is pleased to announce our new and improved online giving page! Vanco, our electronic giving provider, has updated their online giving platform to make it easier to make one-time gifts or set up recurring donations to our church. The new page is now live on our website. Nothing about our online giving has changed except for the visual look of the page. You can adjust existing donations, set up new gifts and update personal information much as you have before. How to sign up? It's easy! If you're a new online giver to Holy Cross, simply visit our website at <https://www.holycrossway.org/holy-cross-lutheran-church/donate>, and then click the "Donate Now" button. From there you can sign up to create a Vanco Online account and give to our various ministries. If you already have a Vanco account (if you have already set up a user-name and password on our online donation page), you can log in to the new page using the same username and password as before. Simply tap or click the "Log In" button at the top right of your screen. From there you can update scheduled donations or set up new recurring gifts by clicking "Profile" and then "View Scheduled Donations." You can also check out this Vanco Online How-To Guide for step by step instructions: https://www.vancopayments.com/hubfs/Updated_Downloadable_Assets/Faith/Vanco_Online_How_to_Guide_FINAL.pdf. Please stop by the church office or call/email us if you have questions or need assistance.

ENDOWMENT FUND MATCHING OPPORTUNITY

A gracious donor has offered to match dollar for dollar any donations given to the Endowment Fund up to \$10,000. A gift to the Holy Cross Endowment Fund is a gift which 'keeps on giving.' Once a gift is given to the fund, it builds interest or income. Only the interest is spent annually. The larger the fund grows, the greater the amount of interest that's available for the congregation to use for key non-budgeted items. This is an important fund for Holy Cross. For example, this year the Fund was used for the purchase and installation of 12 outdoor security cameras. Currently the Endowment Fund balance is approximately \$385,000. Praise God for this wonderful opportunity!

SERMON VIDEO LINKS

Holy Cross will begin sharing videos of our most recent sermons with you. Our hope in doing this is twofold. First of all, we hope that, as you watch these videos yourself as a part of your own regular devotional life, the Holy Spirit would strengthen your faith during the week. Secondly, we ask that you share these videos with your friends, relatives, and neighbors as you see fit. You could forward this email on to those you think would be interested, or simply copy and paste the links to your social media feed for all your online friends. For example, if there's a sermon that addresses a particular topic, such as grief, you can pass it on to someone you know is grieving. Our Savior told His disciples to "preach the gospel to all creation" (Mk 16:15), and this is just one more we can fulfill His great commission. And we have the promise from God that, as the apostle Paul says, "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ" (Ro 10:17). The Holy Spirit will work on human hearts wherever His Word is proclaimed.

12/17/23 - Rejoice in the True Christmas Spirit - Pastor Piet Van Kampen

<https://vimeo.com/895581911?share=copy>

HOLIDAY GREETINGS FROM OUR EARLY LEARNING TEAM!

Love spreading holiday cheer? This season, consider spreading some holiday cheer to our Early Learning Center classrooms!

We have ideas both big and small to help our children learn and grow.

Click the link below, or scan the code with your camera, to check out our Amazon wishlist. In the comment section, you will see which classroom the item is for. Dreamers: infant room, Explorers: one-year-old room, Growers: two-year-old room, Movers: 3K, Thinkers: 4K

Thank you very much for your love, generosity, and support!



2024 ALTAR FLOWER CHART

The 2024 altar flower chart is posted on the bulletin board in the Welcome Center near the Fireside Room. If you would like to provide flowers for the altar, sign up with your name, contact information, and the occasion. You can bring in your own flowers or the Altar Guild will order flowers for you. The usual bouquet is \$40 but you can make it any amount you like. Make checks payable to HOLY CROSS ALTAR GUILD. Drop off or mail your check in an envelope marked ALTAR FLOWERS. You may take the bouquet after the last service and enjoy it at home.

ELS/WELS BIBLE CLASS OPPORTUNITY

A lot of people believe in "Jesus," but once you start talking about the "Jesus" they believe in, you find that he is nothing like the Jesus you believe in. Phony Jesuses abound and seem almost hip-deep everywhere you look. Now comes the hard question – is the Jesus whom you believe in the one revealed in the Bible, or is he someone you find comforting but who you have patched together from ideas you have heard at various times in your life? In his book entitled *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?*, Rev. Matthew Richard explores this issue. In a 12-session class at 6:30 pm on Thursday evenings beginning January 4, Dr. Arthur Eggert will lead a class through the book and show how to be sure that you are believing in the biblical Jesus. The live sessions will be held at Peace Lutheran in Sun Prairie and will be 90 minutes long. The class will be split, with 6 sessions before Lent and 6 after. If you cannot attend in person, you can join the class online or view the recorded sessions later. All the necessary information for registering and attending is available on the Online Classes page of the In Terra Pax website www.interrapaxlp.com. Necessary information, class notes, and session videos will be updated on this website on a weekly basis.

24-25 KINDERGARTEN INFORMATION MEETING

Mark your calendar for January 10, 2024 for a presentation on Kindergarten for the 24-25 school year. It will be held in the Fireside room from 4:30-5:30 PM. This event is for parents to hear about our program and meet the teacher and principal. Please use this link to sign up. Spread the word about our great school!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30EoD4EAFAB2CAFA7-46493473-kindergarten>

"LET GO LET GOD" WINTER TEEN RETREAT

7th – 12th grade teens are invited to a 24-hour retreat of sports, games, art, faith-building Bible sessions, and an indoor camping experience with tents, "campfire," and campfire songs. Teens who come will be encouraged in their identity as a Christian and surrounded by a community of faith just like them. Our theme for this year is, "Let go. Let God." Pastor Titus Buelow will be leading and guiding the retreat with a team of volunteers to ensure this will be an amazing 24 hours for all! The retreat begins Saturday, February 3th, at 3pm and concludes on Sunday, February 4th, at 3pm. You can find more information and registration forms at

<https://www.stpeterslutheran-helenville.org/page/youth-group>. Sign up ASAP! Spots will fill up fast.

SENIOR MINISTRY: BINGO

Senior Ministry is sponsoring Bingo for 55+ adults at 1PM, January 15, 2024 in the Fireside Room. *Please sign up on the sheet in the Welcome Center of the church.* Can't wait to see you there!