

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

7901 Westview Dr.

Houston, TX 77055

Tel. 713-686-8253

Website: www.holycross.us

e-mail: hclc@holycross.us

Fax 713-686-9095

Rev. Jim Berggren
Organist: Rob Carty

January 10, 2021

Baptism of Our Lord
Epiphany 1

WORSHIP SERVICE

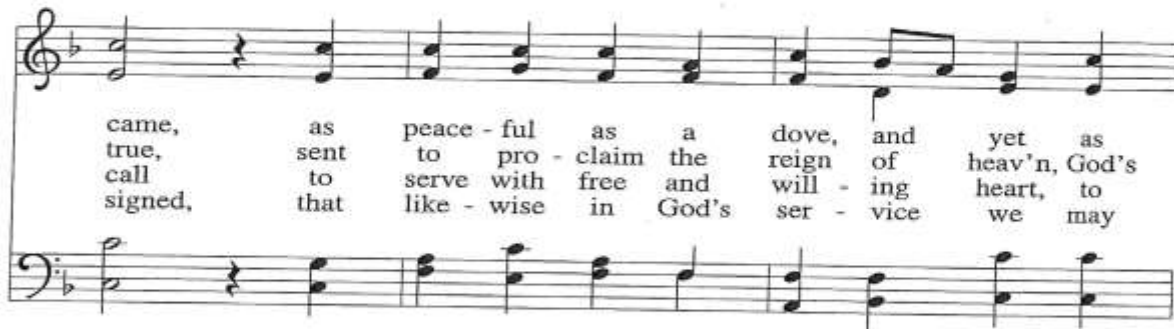
PRELUDE

HYMN (*Please stand*)

Christ, When for Us You Were Baptized



1 Christ, when for us you were bap - tized, God's Spir - it on you
2 God called you, "My be - lov - ed Son"; you are God's ser - vant
3 Straight-way and stead-fast un - til death you then o - beyed the
4 Bap - tize us with your Spir - it, Lord; your cross on us be



came, as peace - ful as a dove, and yet as
true, sent to pro - claim the reign of heav'n, God's
call to serve with free and will - ing heart, to
signed, that like - wise in God's ser - vice we may



ur - gent as a flame, as ur - gent as a flame.
ho - ly will to do, God's ho - ly will to do.
give your life for all, to give your life for all.
per - fect free - dom find, may per - fect free - dom find.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

C: **Amen**

(Please sit)

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen**

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

P: Most merciful God,

C: **we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for you, and for his sake God forgives you all your sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ he gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

HYMN OF PRAISE



1 Glo-ry be to God in heav-en; peace, good-will to all the earth.
2 Glo-ry be to Christ for - ev - er, Lamb of God and Lord of love.
3 Ho - ly One we now ac-claim you; Lord a - lone, to you we call;



Might-y God of all cre - a - tion, Fa - ther of sur - pass - ing worth:
Son of God and gra - cious Sav - ior, you have come from heav'n a - bove;
Ho - ly One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:



we ex - alt you, we a - dore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.
on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.
Je - sus Christ, with God the Spir - it, in the Fa - ther's splen - dor bright.



Saints and an - gels bow be - fore you; here on earth our songs we raise.
Hear our prayer; re - store, for - give us; in your prom - ise firm we stand.
For the peace that we in - her - it, glo - ry be to God on high!

APOSTLES' CREED

(Please stand)

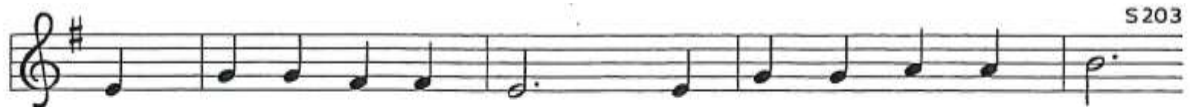
P: God has made us His people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith:

**C: I believe in God the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
He ascended into heaven,
He is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

(Please sit)



S 203

1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.
2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.
3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.
Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also, with you.

P: Let us pray, together.

C: Holy God, creator of light and giver of goodness, your voice moves over the waters. Immerse us in your grace, and transform us by your Spirit, that we may follow after your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

FIRST READING **Genesis 1:1-5**

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

The word of the Lord.

*Congregational response following the reading is: **Thanks be to God!***

SECOND READING **Acts 19:1-7**

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. ²He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” They replied, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” ³Then he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They answered, “Into John’s baptism.” ⁴Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.” ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied— ⁷altogether there were about twelve of them.

The word of the Lord.

*Congregation response following the reading is: **Thanks be to God!***

THE HOLY GOSPEL **Mark 1:4-11** (*Please stand*)

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

The Baptism of Jesus

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

*Congregational response following the Gospel is: **Thanks be to God!***

SERMON (*Please sit*)

Video Link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZdjtThWfWp0>

EPIPHANY 1, Baptism of Our Lord

Johnny wanted to join a Baptist church and be baptized with total body immersion. But there was a problem. He was 6’5” tall and 350 pounds. He won’t fit in a church baptistry. He knew a Baptist pastor whose daughter he dated in college, so he asked him to help with a baptism. Pastor Johnson looked him up and down and said, “Johnny, if you’re serious, just dipping you and getting you a little wet won’t do. We’re going to have to find a place in Clear Lake to anchor you overnight.”

As you know, Sam Houston was the first president of the Republic of Texas. He was also, in 1827, the governor of Tennessee, the only man to preside over two of these United States. In 1832, he bludgeoned a congressman from Ohio for calling him a fraud. He used a hickory cane harvested from the estate of President Andrew Jackson. He was a brawler. As a teenager he ran away from home and became a member of the Cherokee nation. He wore native American garb to Congress and pressed for Indian rights. He was an enthusiastic brawler, personally, politically and militarily. His second marriage to Margaret Lea, a devout Baptist changed his life. With her support and help, he made a commitment to Christ.

His baptism was arranged for November 19, 1854. Pastor Rufus C. Burleson, the pastor of Independence Baptist Church and the president of Baylor, did the baptism in the “Baptizing Hole”, on Rocky Creek, south of College Station. 250 people were there to watch and celebrate as a cold front blew in from the northeast. Pastor Burleson commented, “You should give someone your watch and your wallet.”

General Houston said, “I’m afraid my wallet needs baptizing too.”

Coming up out of the freezing water, Pastor Burleson said, “Well, General, all your sins have been washed away!”

“If that be the case, Pastor,” replied Houston, “God help the fish down below!” Known for his foul mouth, he never cursed again, and he gave generously to Independence Baptist Church and Baylor University. He was a messy guy, but he was fully engaged in service to humankind.

To the untrained eye, I am sure that Jesus looked pretty messy too. Really, is that what God made Man is supposed to look like. Common ideas of the attributes of messiahs were idealized impossibilities. Jesus came to put the Mess in Messiah.

From early childhood on, we are trained to work for good grades, privileges, to earn exemptions, to stack up points for future use, and to save tokens of imputed value to turn in for redemption later. Investing in Cultural Indulgences! We make heroes of those who seem exempt from the usual problems of life, and we admire those who have privilege. Celebrity sets a standard that is impossible to realize, and occasionally fatal to attempt, even when you are a celebrity. You wanna be a real gangsta? A celebrity player on the hip scene?

Better invest first in bail bond companies, legal fee escrows, bodyguards, rehabs, STD medicines, body armor, and a gated house with walls and security. Perhaps it is harder for celebrities than it is for Mr. Average, because we only see the glitter and the mythical commercial spin. But the celebrity feels the pain and knows with guilt the vast discrepancy between the way things really is and the image projected. There’s a big difference between a mirror and a camera. You can cover up the kink in your slinky with a camera, but you can’t fix it. Let’s face it. Although exemption and privilege are fondly held dreams, there is no such thing as permanent entitlement. If you don’t believe me, ask any midwife or undertaker.

Hope is not a bad thing. Dreams and ambitions are motivating. Realistic privileges and realistic exemptions can be the result of realistic ambitions. Most people who are virtuoso musicians and enjoy the benefits of their skill would be offended if we discounted their skill as mere genius, not taking into account the hours and years of practice that got them to that point. Choices and sacrifices preceded the privileges. It was a difficult messy road. But worth it.

Too often, the hope is for a quicker fix. John the Baptist was trying to fix the messy world. Jesus entered into the mess in solidarity through his baptism. He put the Mess in Messiah.

Things are never as good as we imagine they could be. The world is a mess. That’s nothing new. It always has been a mess. We dream of ways to get out of the mess, or maybe even be exempt from the mess. Messianic hopes have always

abounded, and always will. Who will save us from the mess and grant exemptions? In Jesus' day that was obviously an issue, but no more so than in our day. But exemption is not redemption.

Every individual, family, community, and culture have some idea of what they think might save us from the mess. We harbor in our hearts some wonderful ideas concerning fixing the mess. The arts, and the narratives of our culture, those who we lift up and admire as celebrities, and the heroes and nobles that pass out privileges and exemptions can give us some interesting clues as to the messianic expectations of our age. Maybe the next batch of lords and leaders will institute justice and save us all from the mess.

Do you want to research this? Do you want to know about the subliminal messianic hopes of American culture? Then start reading comic books. Most are now being made into epic films, a resurgence of poignant pining for the perfect privileges. Super heroes with super skills and super ambitions to save abound. All are exempt from one or more of the limiting features of life. They are above the mess.

Superman's lucky. He is exempt from gravity. Saves on airfare, not to mention a future without jowls, or wattles, or Dunlap's Disease (where your belly done lapped over your belt). Richard Reed, the Elastic Man from Fantastic Four is exempt from the limitation of a body in space. He can stretch any part of his body into a thread an atom wide. Just think. You could stretch your arm out the car window on the freeway and tap the guy in the next car on the shoulder to remind him to turn his blinker off. Clean up that messy driving on the freeway. The flame-on guy never has to worry about finding a lighter while driving and still paying attention to the road. The last time I did that, I was feeling around in the console, grabbed what felt exactly like a lighter, and inadvertently maced myself. The piquant combination of tear gas and pepper spray was provocative. It's one way to quit smoking.

For their part, both Batman and Spiderman never have to worry about traffic. And they fight crime and clean up urban messes. Wouldn't it be nice to be a part of the Justice League and help them enforce a "NO MESS" policy against the Legion of Doom? Then we could sit back like Alfred E. Neumann and say, "What, Me Worry?" No more mess.

That's all well and good for ideologues and dreamers, but it doesn't work in human society. Someone else's idea of perfection may well be your experience of slavery. In shaping a perfect Rousseauian society of Noble Savages, the French Revolution managed to kill 600,000 of its own citizens. In contrast, the American Revolution proceeded on the assumption that all people are messy but they will work toward their own advantage and their own dream, and in the process make life better

for themselves and the people around them. A constitutional republic with checks and balances will help to mediate a workable society.

But of course, we know that there is One who is more exempt from everything than a United States Congressman. There is One who enjoys all privilege, power, and entitlement. And we call him God, right?

Well, at one time in the era that we call B.C., that may have been the case for many deep religious thinkers. After all, in trying to visualize the unimaginable, the best we can do is imagine what might give us temporary relief from the day-to-day mess. Hence messianic expectations. Another way to tell God what you think he could be doing. That's not an especially original sin. We all do it and I'm guessing that God's used to that and that's why he sent his son, Jesus. To put a little mess back in Messiah.

Even John the Baptizer, according to Jesus, the Greatest Prophet, did it. Matthew 3:13-15. "Sorry cousin, but you get a baptismal exemption today. No need for you to get wet or muddy." And here is an example of Jesus saying "NO". John is willing to extend executive privilege and (ha, ha) save Jesus...from the troubles of the human mess.

For \$14.50 you can buy a product called 'Sprayonmud' that you can put on your 4WD truck so it looks like you've been mudding. It is a rationale for your environmentally aware neighbors about why you are driving a wilderness equipped SUV with 30-inch tires, eight feet tall, and mileage in the single digits, to soccer practice.

The one thing I love about God is that he is not embodied in a pretentious fake messiah. That in creating reality, he is absolutely true to what is real. In the Baptism of Jesus, He steps into the muddy water with us. He doesn't exempt himself from messy life. He doesn't use Sprayonmud so he'll just look authentic. He is authentic. He shares the messes of our wildernesses, our temptations, our unrealistic expectations that disappoint us, our desires for privilege, and all of our struggles. He shares the final mess of extreme prejudice on a cross. Thank God, Jesus came to put the mess in Messiah!

Amen.

HYMN (Please remain seated)

Baptized in Water

1 Bap-tized in wa - ter, sealed by the Spir - it, cleansed by the
2 Bap-tized in wa - ter, sealed by the Spir - it, dead in the
3 Bap-tized in wa - ter, sealed by the Spir - it, marked with the

blood of Christ our king: heirs of sal - va - tion, trust - ing his
tomb with Christ our king: one with his ris - ing, freed and for -
sign of Christ our king: born of the Spir - it, we are God's

prom - ise, faith - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.
giv - en, thank - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.
chil - dren; joy - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION



COMMUNION

S 208

1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;

The musical notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It contains three measures of music, each corresponding to one of the three vocal parts listed below. The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes.

you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.
e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

The musical notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It contains three measures of music, each corresponding to one of the three vocal parts listed below. The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, Our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples saying: Take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks and gave it for all to drink saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me.

THE 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.**

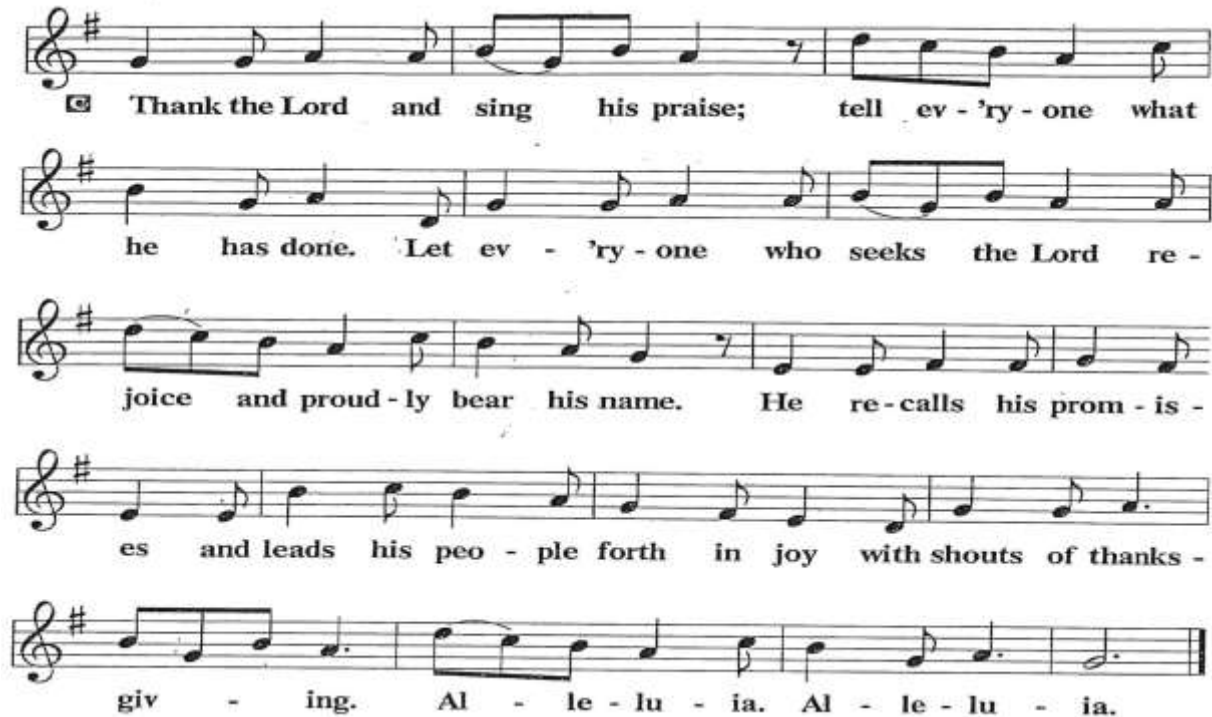
**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**



COMMUNION

The Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and preserve you in Eternal Life.

POST COMMUNION



☐ Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev - 'ry - one what
he has done. Let ev - 'ry - one who seeks the Lord re -
jice and proud - ly bear his name. He re - calls his prom - is -
es and leads his peo - ple forth in joy with shouts of thanks -
giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYERS

God of all goodness, generations have turned to you, gathered around your table, and shared your abundant blessings. Number us among them that, as we gather these gifts from your abundance, and give thanks for your rich blessings, we may feast upon your very self and care for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant.

Amen.

BENEDICTION



RECESSIONAL HYMN (Please stand)

WITNES

Shine, Jesus, Shine

67

Refrain

Shine, Je - sus, shine, fill this land with the Fa - ther's glo - ry;
 blaze, Spir - it, blaze, set our hearts on fire.
 Flow, riv - er, flow, flood the na - tions with grace and mer - cy;
 send forth your Word, Lord, and let there be light!

1 Lord, the light of your love is shin - ing, in the midst of the
 2 As we gaze on your king - ly bright-ness, so our fac - es dis -

dark - ness, shin - ing; Je - sus, light of the world, shine up - on us,
 play your like - ness, ev - er chang - ing from glo - ry to glo - ry,

set us free, by the truth you now bring us.
 mir - rored here, may our lives tell your sto - ry.

Refrain

Shine on me, shine on me:
 Shine on me, shine on me:

Please be seated for the Postlude

GO IN PEACE, SERVE THE WORLD

OFFERING PLATE IN NARTHEX



PSALM 19:14

*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.*

✠✠ Blessings



- Dolores Abrego
David Dukleth
Freddie Gardner
John Krueger
Marshall Long
Nanette Luker
Larry Polzin
Laura Ruthstrom
Billy Sosa
Dolores Sosa
Uzo Uzo
Michael Vaccaro
Tristan Walton
and
Victims of CoVid-19



WELCA NEWS

WELCA will be taking donation year-round for the Houston Seafarers Christmas Box Program. Countless sailors pass through the Port of Houston every day and we seek to make them more comfortable by giving them boxes filled with the following:

Toothpaste	Aspirin	Small games
Toothbrush	Lotion	Hard candy
Combs	Caps	Kleenex
Socks	Notepads	Bactine
Shampoo	Pencils	Playing cards
Body soap		

These items can be dropped off in the annex. If possible, please include an empty shoe box. Thank you.

Nancy Beamesderfer

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Our Prayer Shawl Ministry has begun. Unfortunately, we have not been able to meet in person, but thanks to many volunteers we have collected quite an array of shawls in all sizes, shapes, and colors.

If you know anyone that would like a shawl, please let us know. We will continue to work individually until such time as we can meet together.

Wendy Lambeth (713) 854-1573



Next

COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday, **January 20**, 2021, at 1:15 p.m. in the Annex.

Church Council

THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS

11 MONDAY	12 TUESDAY	13 WEDNESDAY	14 THURSDAY	15 FRIDAY	16 SATURDAY
<p>11 am—12 noon ELC Chapel —WC</p> <p>4—5 pm Basketball group SM—FLC</p> <p>5:30—6:30 pm Basketball group SC—FLC</p> <p>7—8 pm Basketball group LG—FLC</p>	<p>11—12 noon ELC Chapel —WC</p> <p>6:30—7:30 pm Basketball group LG-FLC</p>	<p>9:30 am Deborah Circle —FLCA</p> <p>10 am-12 pm ELC KiA —FLC</p> <p>12 pm Bible study —AT (Atrium)</p>	<p>10 am-12 pm ELC KiA —FLC</p> <p>1 pm Ruth Circle —FLCA</p> <p>6—7:30 pm Basketball group TN—FLC</p> <p>8 pm AA Women —FLCA</p>		<p>9 am-12 noon Food Pantry Food Fair —Parking Lot</p> <p>3 pm Friendship Club —FLC</p> <p>4:30 pm Guitar class —CR</p> <p>6:00 pm Saturday Informal service —AT</p>

AT=Atrium, CR=Choir Room, FLC= Family Life Center, FLCA=Annex, Media Room=MR
 PL=Parking Lot, WC=Worship Center, YR=Youth Room, ELC=Early Learning Center