

# Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

7901 Westview Dr.

Houston, TX 77055

Tel. 713-686-8253

Website: [www.holycross.us](http://www.holycross.us)

e-mail: [hclc@holycross.us](mailto:hclc@holycross.us)

713-686-8254

Rev. Jim Berggren

April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Third Sunday of Easter

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## WORSHIP SERVICE

### PRELUDE

### GATHERING SONG

*Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain*

ELW 363

### INVOCATION

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

C: *Amen.*

P: God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: *Amen.*

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

C: *We confess that we are captive 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: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of V Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

C: *Amen.*

**PASTORAL GREETING**

**THE KYRIE**

**CANTICLE OF PRAISE**

*This is the Feast*

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also, with you.**

P: Let us pray, together.

C: **Holy and righteous God, you are the author of life, and you adopt us to be your children. Fill us with your words of life, that we may live as witnesses to the resurrection of 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**

**April 14, 2024 – Third Sunday of Easter**

**FIRST READING: Acts 3:12-19**

<sup>12</sup> When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? <sup>13</sup> The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. <sup>14</sup> You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. <sup>15</sup> You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. <sup>16</sup> By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

<sup>17</sup> “Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. <sup>18</sup> But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. <sup>19</sup> Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

*The word of the Lord.*

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

**THE PSALM      Psalm 4**

**SECOND READING:    1 John 3:1-7**

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup>Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears,<sup>[a]</sup> we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup>All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

<sup>4</sup>Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. <sup>5</sup>But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. <sup>6</sup>No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

<sup>7</sup>Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

*The word of the Lord.*

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

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:**

ELW Pg. 151

*Alleluia.*

*Lord, to whom shall we go?*

*You have the words of eternal life.*

*Alleluia.*

**THE HOLY GOSPEL      Luke 24:36b-48**

**Jesus Appears to the Disciples**

<sup>36</sup>While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

<sup>37</sup>They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. <sup>38</sup>He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? <sup>39</sup>Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”

<sup>40</sup> When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. <sup>41</sup> And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” <sup>42</sup> They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup> and he took it and ate it in their presence.

<sup>44</sup> He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

<sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup> He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup> and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things.

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

*Congregational response: Praise to you, O Christ.*

**YOUTUBE VIDEO – [https://youtu.be/ePOuHgewTSE?si=8rtbOdKKJR\\_92GMz](https://youtu.be/ePOuHgewTSE?si=8rtbOdKKJR_92GMz)**

## **Sermon Rev. Jim Berggren**

**EASTER 3B, 4-14-24 Luke 24.36-48**

### **DISBELIEVING FOR JOY**

Last words are always interesting, holding perhaps clues to the future, or explanations of the past: Perhaps confessions and repentance, maybe emotional closure for the survivors, or important advice.

A lawyer was consoling a weeping widow. Her husband died without a will. He asked, “Did the deceased have any last words?” She sobbed, “You mean right before he died?” He said, “Yes, it would be helpful if it is not too painful for you to remember.” She said, “As I remember, he said, ‘You don’t scare me.... you couldn’t hit the side of a barn.’”

William Palmer, English doctor was the subject of the trial of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for multiple murders by poisoning. Charles Dickens considered him the greatest villain that ever stood in the *Old Bailey*. He was sentenced to death by hanging. 30,000 people showed up for the spectacle. His last words as he stepped up to the gallows and looked at the trapdoor were, “Are you sure it’s safe?”

Relevant to our day and time, in this increasingly pagan world, are the last words of Hasan-i-Sabbah. He was a radically political social engineer, an Arab war-lord of the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD, whose militant group, the Hash'shashin brought two interesting words to the English language. The Hash'shashin, used *HASHISH* to prepare themselves for their work of *ASSASSINATION*. Drugs and murder: creedal behaviors of the man whose last words were, "Nothing is true, everything is permitted," modern words of treason, anarchy, and death.

According to the witness of Luke, Jesus' last words to his disciples were, "Repentance and forgiveness are to be preached in Christ's name to everyone, everywhere, starting now." That is our context.

One popular default view of Jesus is that he is all about love. "All you need is love." It was an early song but still, five of the last words that people would remember about the Beatle's after their breakup as a group. The power of love was the theme and the moral of the Beatle's film, *Yellow Submarine*.

Later, John Lennon as a solo act wrote, "*Imagine*." "Imagine there's no heaven, it's easy if you try...and no religion, too." Church choirs actually sing that. That's a derangement that happens when hippies take too many drugs. The Beatles shouldn't have tried to fit Yoko Ono into a great quartet.

Most certainly, Jesus was love personified. It is a noble ethical goal. In seminary, my ethics professor, Dr. Bob Benne, would affirm my teleological final utopian goal of universal love through Beatle's theology. Then he would challenge me. "How do you get there? What are the middle principles? What do you do every day to make love real?" Without intermediate steps showing progress toward the goal, it is all wishy-squishy, hippy-dippy, ooey-gooey religious rhetoric. After all, The People's Temple Cult led by Jim Jones, with its commune in Jonestown, Guyana, was all about "love." 900 people died, a third of them under 17 years of age. No middle principles. Maybe...don't drink the Kool-Aid without knowing the ingredients, and the one who mixed it up.

At this point in the disciples' experience, they are barely venturing out in public: Still in a state of Good Friday shock. A couple of pilgrims on the 7 mile walk to Emmaus from Jerusalem, talked to a stranger who they claimed, revealed himself to them as the Risen Christ, but he broke bread and then apparently disappeared, just as they recognized him, before they could verify that he was indeed an incarnate, solid, not-a-ghost person. Middle principles: Study the Scriptures and bless the bread together. You will then recognize the Risen Christ, love personified

Then Jesus appears to them gathered as a group. He asks for food and he eats. He has teeth. He is real, with bones and digestion, not a ghost. We're talking serious bodyness, here. Wounds, hunger, teeth chewing and swallowing. It's real,

ok. The blessing of breaking bread is one step, a middle principle all its own, in a very small intimate setting. The bread is not even consumed yet at the Emmaus stopover. There, we are only spiritually prepared to eat.

The insistent sensuality of Christianity is almost an embarrassment. Jesus used spit and dirt to make mud to put in a man's eye, to heal his blindness. Did you ever get an infinitesimally small grain of pollen under your contact lens while riding a motorcycle at 60 miles per hour? It is a serious full body experience.

Jesus scripturally breathes on people to fill them with his spirit. He'd be arrested in certain places in America for doing that. Premeditated, 1<sup>st</sup> degree violation of social distancing protocols. The official isolation can be re-invoked at any time. The World Health Organization says so. Just use 'gain of function' research to engineer a novel disease and, oops....it got away from us.

Jesus is all there. He has four kinds of wounds, each potentially fatal; scalp exsanguination from a skullcap of thorns, (it wasn't a narrow headband), the scourge marks on his front, back, and sides, nail holes in his wrists and feet and the spear wound in his side. On the way to God's love, Jesus invites us to touch the wounds, to participate in his broken body. Another principled Beatles one-liner lyric comes to mind: "Hold him in your arms 'til you can feel his disease."

All the crime shows have an occasional kidnapping plot in their dramatic series. In those episodes, the smart hostage negotiators insist on 'proof of life,' before they will consider a ransom. In his love for us, Jesus provides proof of vitality after fatality. The crowd of disciples are stunned. They feel incredible joy. It's unbelievable. They disbelieve for joy.

Furthermore, Jesus says, "Got anything to eat? I'm starving." Grace comes to us through our flesh. It is carnal. How do you know you have received grace unless you felt it through your senses? You can't call forth hope out of satiation and contentment. Maybe a sleepy burp, but not hope. Hope comes out of anguish and hunger. Life comes through the flesh. Pain comes through the flesh. Healing comes through the flesh. The primary focus of the action and promise of God for you is in your body, in Christ's body. Sharing that meal as a group is a middle principle of love.

Jesus then has a few last words for us about preaching repentance and forgiveness, practical steps toward love, unity and atonement: The overarching middle principles.

Here's the deal. We are no longer subjects to the winds of fate and the arbitrary notions and emotions of the fickle gods. We are no longer objects to be pushed around and put into strategic positioning for the principalities and powers to

play with and exploit. We are now Christ's Pro-jects, his project. He projects us out into the world to spread the good news of repentance and forgiveness, true power incarnate, in the flesh. God's power of love. It is enough to make one disbelieve for joy!

Repentance begins with confession. "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." The TV show, *Current Affair*, featured a story on a lady who developed a 900 number phone service called, "The Confession Line." She received confessions from petty theft, through adultery and sex crimes, to out and out murder. After a year of operation, she had 25 lines that were busy 24 hours a day. People need to confess. She expanded to 100 lines to keep up with the demand. She claimed that in the first year of operation, "The Confession Line" made close to 17 million dollars. But still, where does one go for forgiveness? To a person. To the Incarnate Christ. To the Body of Christ, the Church.

We are Jesus' project into the world to proclaim, "Turn around, repent," and "you are forgiven." The past has happened. This is a new day, a new start. Each of our lives is a unique and valuable pro-ject/projection of incarnate faith. The institutions of religion and politics are tempted by the world to proclaim a one-size-fits-all morality. (Which ultimately fits no one.) We struggle to be faithful about all social justice issues. And still in the plurality of our world, we find ourselves supporting different sides of different issues, with different information, at different times and different places. People may or may not agree with certain moral proclamations. There was not a more faithful group of moral arbiters than the Pharisees, and yet Jesus often found himself in conflict with them.

I lift up seven middle principles, small steps to Christlike love:

1. Study Scripture.
2. Prepare spiritually by blessing the nourishment that brings us together.
3. Empathize by feeling the wounds of others.
4. Share food and life together.
5. Confess.
6. Repent.
7. Forgive.

Our project of faith is the Gospel. Moral certitude is good. Now question it, because like us, it is flawed. Question authority, especially your own. Life goes better with repentance and forgiveness. Repentance and forgiveness are not stopping points in the desert of moral certitude.

They are the steps along the way; structural middle principles moving us toward Christ's perfect love. Today, "Woke," means that someone has caved in to an unprincipled trance. Aware persons who are awake, know that they experience separation from God, others, and themselves. That's a given for everyone. Simply acknowledge that fact. You are forgiven. It is too good to be true. If it is hard to believe, DISBELIEVE FOR JOY!!! Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

*Now the Green Blades Rises*

**ELW 379**

## **INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS**

### **APOSTLES' CREED**

**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.**



## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

**THE LORD'S PEACE** (Please share the Peace with a neighbor)

**THE OFFERING**

*“Jesus Rose”*

C. McClure

**THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE** *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful*

ELW Hymn 142

## THE OFFERING PRAYER

**Presider:** Risen One, you call us to believe and bear fruit. May the gifts that we offer here be signs of your abiding love. Form us to be your witnesses in the world, through Jesus Christ, our true vine.

**Congregation:** Amen.

## AGNUS DEI

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,  
have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,  
have, mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,  
grant us thy peace.

## 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 DISTRIBUTION**

*Lamb of God*

ELW Pg. 146

## POST COMMUNION BLESSING

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

**POST COMMUNION SONG**

*Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise*

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**Presider:** Shepherding God, you have prepared a table before us and nourished us with your love. Send us forth from this banquet to proclaim your goodness and share the abundant mercy of Jesus, our redeemer and friend.

**Congregation:** Amen.

**THE BLESSING**

**SENDING SONG**

*I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light*

**ELW 815**

**GO IN PEACE, IN SERVICE**

*C: Thanks be to God!*

**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.*



- ♣ **Candy Berggren**
- ♣ **Elvin Bethea**
- ♣ **Pat Bethea**
- ♣ **Barney Boeker**
- ♣ **Susan Caradec**
- ♣ **Bill Carty**
- ♣ **Vicki Carty**
- ♣ **Lorraine Chavez**
- ♣ **Patty Conberi**
- ♣ **Cathy Doughty**
- ♣ **David Dukleth**
- ♣ **Steve Forrester**
- ♣ **Anna Gardner**
- ♣ **Linda Kuhar**
- ♣ **Kenneth Magrill**
- ♣ **Todd Miskel**
- ♣ **Jeremy Mitchell**
- ♣ **Geraine Moore**
- ♣ **LaVerne Pivonka**
- ♣ **Dorothy Preuss**
- ♣ **Rosie Stork**
- ♣ **Vern Terry**
- ♣ **Jaime Urbanski**
- ♣ **Bennie Valites**
- ♣ **David Watson**



## **ALTAR FLOWERS**

Altar flowers are given by Warren and Penny Schick  
in celebration of their Wedding Anniversary.

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The red rose on the Altar is given by Barbara Sledge  
in Thanksgiving celebration of her new great-grandson  
Leon Miguel Sledge, son of Zack and Maria Sledge.

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## **COUNCIL MEETING**

Council meeting will be Sunday, **April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024**  
at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.  
Church Council

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## **FRIENDSHIP CLUB**

The Friendship Club will be meeting at  
the Ragin Cajun located at 1725 Wirt Rd (77055)  
**Saturday, April 20.**

Please note the time **CHANGE**: we will begin to gather at **4:00 pm.**

Looking forward to seeing y'all!"

Nancy Beamesderfer

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## MEMORIAL GIFTS

On behalf of Holy Cross Lutheran Church, we thank the Betty Firth family for using their Memorial gifts toward the landscaping.

In addition, we thank the Merle Jensen, Stan Crick, Clarice Gross, Madelyn Price, Bernice Rogge and Dorsey Mae Alexander families for donating to the music/organ and audio/visual funds.

Your gifts are greatly appreciated and gratefully received.

HCLC Memorial Fund

Tillie Remmert, Chairman

Penny Schick, Member

John Lambeth, Member

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## LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS

### APRIL

- 7 Reader – Steve Schulze  
P/E – Linda Cuzzort
- 14 Reader – Nancy Beamesderfer  
P/E – Penny Schick
- 21 Reader – Ike Thompson  
P/E – John Stokes
- 28 Reader – Mallory Hileman  
P/E – Nancy Beamesderfer

P/E stands for Prayers and Eucharist

Nancy Beamesderfer

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**SAFEGUARDS SAFETY TRAINING**  
**HOLYCROSS COUPON CODE FOR 15% DISCOUNT: HCLC2024**

<b>CLASS</b>	<b>DAY</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>
Adult CPR *CPR only (\$79) *CPR + First Aid (\$92)	Sunday	4/7/2024	1 pm — 4:30 pm
	Saturday	5/4/2024	1 pm — 4:30 pm
	Sunday	5/26/2024	1 pm — 4:30 pm
	Sunday	6/9/2024	1 pm — 4:30 pm
Adult & Pediatric CPR *CPR only (\$85) *CPR + First Aid (\$99)	Saturday	4/6/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Friday	4/19/2024	9 am — 1:30 pm
	Saturday	5/18/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Friday	5/31/2024	9 am — 1:30 pm
	Saturday	6/15/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Sunday	6/30/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm
Basic Life Support (Healthcare Providers and Professional Rescuers) (\$89)	Saturday	4/13/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Friday	5/3/2024	9 am — 1:30 pm
	Friday	5/17/2024	9 am — 1:30 pm
	Saturday	5/23/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	6/8/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	6/27/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm
CPR Instructor Course (\$325)	Saturday	4/20/2024	9 am — 5:30 pm
	Friday	5/10/2024	9 am — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	6/1/2024	9 am — 5:30 pm
	Friday	6/21/2024	9 am — 5:30 pm

Classes are in the Youth Room, Media Room and in the Annex.

You can sign up online for classes by going to

[www.safeguards-safety.com](http://www.safeguards-safety.com) and choosing “Register for Classes.”

Or call 713-854-8085 for more information

Congregation members and their families will receive a discount of 15% for any class by using the above-mentioned coupon code when signing up.

John Lambeth

## SUNDAY'S SCHEDULE

**9:30 a.m.**      *Traditional Worship service with Rev. Jim Berggren –WC*  
*Nursery is available for small children during the service – Crib Room*

**10:30 a.m.**      *Coffee fellowship following the service –FLC*

### THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS

15 Mon	16 Tues	17 Wed	18 Thurs	19 Fri	20 Sat
<p><b>11—12 pm</b> ELC Chapel —WC</p> <p><b>7—8 pm</b> Boy Scout Troop meeting— FLC room</p>	<p><b>10—12 pm</b> Deborah Circle —FLCA</p> <p><b>11—12 pm</b> ELC Chapel —WC</p>	<p><b>9—12 pm</b> ELC KiA –FLC</p> <p><b>10 am</b> Roundtable Group –VR</p> <p><b>11 am</b> Choir Rehearsal —CL</p> <p><b>12 pm</b> Bible Study —AT</p>	<p><b>9—12 pm</b> ELC KiA –FLC</p> <p><b>12—3 pm</b> Food Pantry Cooking class —FLC Kitchen</p> <p><b>8 pm</b> AA Women mtg. —FLCA</p>	<p><b>9—1:30 pm</b> SST Basic Life Support -MR /YR</p>	<p><b>8—12 pm</b> Food Pantry “Food Fair” —parking lot</p> <p><b>4 pm</b> Friendship Club –FLCA</p> <p><b>4:30 pm</b> Guitar class —CR</p> <p><b>6:00 pm</b> Saturday Informal Service —AT</p>

AT =Atrium, CL=Choir Loft, FLC= Family Life Center, FLCA=Annex,  
 KiA= Kids in Action, MR=Media Room, WC=Worship Center, YR=Youth Room  
 BLS=Basic Life Support, SST=Safeguards Safety Training, UCL=Upcycled Crafty Ladies