

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

713-686-8254

Rev. Jim Berggren

April 21st, 2024

Fourth Sunday of Easter

WORSHIP SERVICE

PRELUDE

GATHERING SONG *Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds*

ELW 367

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: **O Lord Christ, good shepherd of the sheep, you seek the lost and guide us into your fold. Feed us, and we shall be satisfied; heal us, and we shall be whole. Make us one with you, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

April 21, 2024 – Fourth Sunday of Easter

FIRST READING: Acts 4:5-12

⁵The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. ⁷They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, ¹⁰then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹Jesus is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone."

¹²Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

The word of the Lord.

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

THE PSALM Psalm 23

SECOND READING: 1 John 3:16-24

¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷ If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? ¹⁸ Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

¹⁹ This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: ²⁰ If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹ Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²² and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴ The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit, he gave us.

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 John 10:11-18

¹¹ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So, when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.”

¹⁴ “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷ The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes

it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Congregational response: Praise to you, O Christ.

YOUTUBE VIDEO – <https://youtu.be/D53UnPMTK7E?si=WGZkH1zboNe0Uk3y>

Sermon Rev. Jim Berggren

EASTER 4B, 4-21-24 JOHN 10.11-18 GOOD SHEEP

“Mardon me padam. I believe you are occupewing my pie. May I sew you to another sheet?” That is a famous spoonerism said by the Reverend William Archibald Spooner, a pastor of the Church of England, and a Warden of Oxford University in the late 1800’s, through 1930. Sometimes he scrambled his words and syllables. At the conclusion of a wedding, he told the couple, “It is kisstomary to cuss the bride.” Preaching on today’s text, he piously intoned that, “the Lord is a shoving leopard.”

Jesus, as a Loving Shepherd is one of the most cherished images of our Lord. Isn’t it curious that we also image Jesus as the Lamb of God? He has lived with us and knows our needs as a flock.

The business world has appropriated the metaphor of ‘shepherd’ as a synonym for a focused, directive, and aggressive leader. In actual sheep herding, a dog, or a goat, or a dominant ewe sheep will do most of the work leading, and the shepherd will follow, far enough back to re-direct stragglers, and watch for predators behind the flock.

Hungry predators will take advantage of the fact that the sheep are most likely to not see approaching danger from the rear unless they are grazing, at which time, they watch behind themselves, backward, through their legs. Sheep have rectangular pupils with eyes on the side of their head. It is an extremely complex eye evolution. They can see about 320 degrees which is almost twice as good as humans who see about 160 degrees with binocular forward facing vision.

Consultants are being paid thousands of dollars a day to teach shepherding leadership skills, strategies and methods for excelling on the dangerous road of life. But nobody ever goes to a high-priced seminar on being a Good Sheep. Nobody

wants to be a good sheep. Have you ever seen a seminar advertised on how to be a good sheeplike follower? Has anyone written a book for the self-help section at Barnes and Noble, entitled *The Art of Followership for Dummies?*” Nobody dreams big dreams about being a follower.

Mr. Olson was our high school music, student teacher in choir, band and orchestra. The day we met him, we were startled, when he, with difficulty, clattered his way to the podium with full leg braces and fancy wrap-around crutches. It was like Robo-Teach. He smiled and said, “Mr. Berggren, could you please pass these papers out to the group?” They were instructions explaining his battle with polio, and physical weakness, and how to follow his way of directing. He was great. You had to watch so carefully; not just waving arms but moving the muscles of his face, the John Belushi eyebrow lift, his eyes, and pointing his nose, wagging his head and nodding. You had to be a smart sheep, extremely observant, to follow this shepherd. This shepherd drew you into his world, a strange and helpless place, and you became workers together for the same goal. Good music transcended all physical limitations. Normally unruly and hormonal high school children were fascinated by his direction.

He was chosen to be the Master of Ceremonies for Stunt Night at Bethany College, an evening of fraternity and sorority skits with jokes, talent acts, and entertainment. He introduced each act and would tell a joke, like a vaudeville comedian. As the program was concluding, he laboriously crutched to center stage, wearing a superman costume. He whipped a bottle marked ‘geritol’ out of his cape, and chugged it down, and threw it and a crutch to one side. Teetering, he rummaged around and found another bottle of ‘geritol’ in his cape, chugged it and threw the other crutch to the ground. And he fell flat with a noisy clatter. The audience was shocked, silent, blown away. Nobody knew how to react. And he laid there, grinning at us from the floor.

Some people started clapping and laughing nervously. A muffled titter ran through the crowd. It grew into a loud cheer of ultimate approval. Stage hands rushed out and braced him upright. They gave him a director’s baton, and he directed the thundering applause, pointing to different sections of the auditorium, which responded with a roar. The north side of Presser Hall roared, and then the south side roared back antiphonally. It was high-decibel liturgy, led by a humble shepherd, a true leader. The most helpless guy in the room, controlled a packed auditorium of robust college kids, who were receiving a life lesson. Incredible. Those kids weren’t stupid. They recognized true courage. They figured out, Mr. Olson knew the score.

Here’s the truth. Stupid sheep are about the same as doubting Thomas. It is a heinous misnomer. Thomas never doubted anything and sheep aren’t stupid. Its

like when people say, “My dog is stupid.” No. You just haven’t watched your dog close enough to see what she needs and why she is doing what she is doing.” That’s a nice way of saying you might not be quite as smart as your dog is. Don’t blame the inability to communicate on someone else!

Sheep hear at twice the range of humans. If you are a loud shepherd they will fear you. If you smile at sheep, they are happy, and if you frown, they become anxious. They can recognize 50 faces, sheep or human, either live or on a photograph, for over two years, and if they’ve seen a frontal view of a face, they can recognize that individual by profile only. This is both live and from a photograph. Most humans can’t do that.

The BBC reported that hungry sheep figured out how to get across 12-foot cattleguard, hoof-proof, 3-inch spaced iron pipes in the ground where a gate would usually be, to get to the farmer’s gardens at the Yorkshire Moors. They would lie down on their side and roll over and over until they were clear on the other side, get up and go have lunch. That is smart problem solving. The rumor that a sheep on its back is helpless is true only when it is heavy with 50 to 100 pounds of soaking wet wool, or caught in vines and brambles.

Sheep are often, in nature, prey. Most of their survival behavior in a flock is to be alert for predators. They won’t go into a dark barn. You have to turn the lights on, or open a window to reassure them. If they sense a dangerous predator, like a coyote, and they are pastured with cattle, they will flock to the middle of the herd of cattle and the cattle will circle and protect them. That grouping of two species is called a ‘flerd.’ Flock and a herd.

Sheep and people got together about 15,000 years ago and domesticated each other for mutual benefits. Perhaps the sheep saw how good the dogs did with domesticating humans, in the 5 or so thousand previous years. So, the sheep decided it was worth it, even with all the barking and noise, to live with the advantage of having a shepherd and dogs to protect them.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and David were all shepherds, good successful shepherds. Their skills with their flocks directly transferred to their leadership qualities, which involved kindness, teamwork, a calm demeanor, patience, a sense of direction, a lot of prayer, and benign control.

Sheep/sinners generally know their own propensity for straying. Strays aren’t bad. They are just in danger. Their situation is often inadvertent, not deliberate rebellion. Not orneriness but instead, cluelessness. In grazing, one green clump of grass leads to another. Sheep/sinners are by nature, instinctually, busy grazers. They are busy to distraction, which leaves out constant situational awareness.

They will consistently, move toward the greener grass, and always move uphill, because they are rear-wheel drive organisms, with most of their weight on the backside. They are happiest and the least worried when they congregate, grazing in a flock with many eyes looking out for danger, and a sheep dog in the front and a shepherd at the rear. They get along great with other species of very different abilities and intelligences. Even smart people have a hard time with that kind of mutually beneficial ecumenicity. Sheep exploit the added protection of other larger grazing livestock, like llamas, goats, cattle and donkeys, and will form a fherd, with a variety of other larger herbivores. “Hey Ewe! I’m a Buffalo and I’ve got your back!” That’s reassuring!

It is just a matter of getting rid of that stigma of sheep being seen as stupid. Great associations of people and communities operate like a smart flock of sheep. Sheep are smart. We help each other to safety and security. We watch out for each other. We move away from danger to a higher vantage point. We form productive alliances with other groups. Predatory people and situations are always there. When we are distracted with the basics of life, it is good to know that there are friendly sheep dogs to encourage the slow of heart, and redirect movement away from danger. And the Great Good Shepherd is there for the most crucial issues.

I have a Good Shepherd. The Lord is a loving shepherd. I love my Good Shepherd. With his guidance and protection, I pray that I can be a Good Sheep! Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY

The King of Love My Shepherd Is

ELW 502

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

“Little Prelude in F”

J. S. Bach

Piano / Organ Duet

Pr. Jim & Rob

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

Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing

ELW 545

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**
- ♣ **Anna Gardner**
- ♣ **Nadine Jones**
- ♣ **Linda Kuhar**
- ♣ **Daniel Lara**
- ♣ **Kenneth Magrill**
- ♣ **Todd Miskel**
- ♣ **Jeremy Mitchell**
- ♣ **Geraine Moore**
- ♣ **Dorothy Preuss**
- ♣ **Rosie Stork**
- ♣ **Vern Terry**
- ♣ **Jaime Urbanski**
- ♣ **Bennie Valites**
- ♣ **David Watson**

**Family & Friends of LaVerne Pivonka
upon completion of her life's mission.**



COUNCIL MEETING

Council meeting will be Sunday, **April 21st, 2024**

at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.

Church Council

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

MAM

Memorial Assistance Ministries
1625 Blalock Rd. - Houston, Texas 77080

Memorial Resale Store

QUARTERLY HALF OFF SALE!

Friday May 17, and Saturday May 18, 2024

MAM will have almost everything 50% off at Blalock location.

(Excluding Boutique and new Jewelry)

*Resale proceeds typically make up 20-30% of MAM's annual revenues,
so, any effort to increase sales directly supports ALL programs and services!*

LOOKING FOR A NEW OR BETTER JOB?

MAM Employment Services

is opening a new vocational training class **May 30, thru June 29, 2024**

for Electrocardiography (EKG Technician) Interpretation Training

See posted flyer for details! or you can log in to **www.mamhouston.org**

If someone you know is looking for a new or better job, this might be a fit.

Healthcare professions generally pay well and are fairly recession resistant.

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

CLASS	DAY	DATE	TIME
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 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
- 11:00 a.m.** Council meeting –FLCA

THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS

22 Mon	23 Tues	24 Wed	25 Thurs	26 Fri	27 Sat
<p><u>CROSSTIES DEADLINE</u></p> <p>11—12 pm ELC Chapel —WC</p>	<p>11—12 pm ELC Chapel —WC</p> <p>7—8 pm Boy Scout Troop meeting—FLC room</p>	<p>10 am Roundtable Group –VR</p> <p>11 am Choir Rehearsal —CL</p> <p>12 pm Bible Study —AT</p>	<p>8 am—4 pm ELC Parent Conferences —FLC</p> <p>10 am—1:30 pm ELC Teacher lunch —VR</p> <p>8 pm AA Women meeting –FLCA</p>		<p>4:30 pm Guitar class —CR</p> <p>6:00 pm Saturday Informal Service —AT</p>

7am—7pm / APRIL 22—30 - SBISD EARLY VOTING / YR

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