

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

November 10, 2024

Pentecost 25B

WORSHIP SERVICE

PRELUDE

GATHERING SONG

As Saints of Old

ELW 695

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 God, you show forth your almighty power chiefly by reaching out to us in mercy. Grant us the fullness of your grace, strengthen us trust in your promises, and bring all the world to share in the treasures that come through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.*

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

November 10, 2024 – Pentecost 25B

FIRST READING: 1 Kings 17:8-16

8 Then the word of the Lord came to him: 9 “Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food.” 10 So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, “Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?” 11 As she was going to get it, he called, “And bring me, please, a piece of bread.”

12 “As surely as the Lord your God lives,” she replied, “I don’t have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die.”

13 Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. 14 For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land.’”

15 She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So, there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. 16 For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

The word of the Lord.

Congregational response following the reading: Thanks be to God!

THE PSALM

Psalm 146

SECOND READING: Hebrews 9:24-28

²⁴ For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. ²⁵ Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. ²⁶ Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

The word of the Lord.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*Alleluia,
Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia.*

THE HOLY GOSPEL Mark 12:38-44

Warning Against the Teachers of the Law

38 As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, **39** and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. **40** They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely."

The Widow's Offering

41 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. **42** But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

43 Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. **44** They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Congregational response: Praise to you, O Christ.

YOUTUBE VIDEO – <https://youtu.be/M2CVKNhIURQ?si=eiPCDv5ZRySQRMLA>

Sermon Rev. Jim Berggren

PENTECOST 25B 11-10-24 MK 12.38-44

“WIDOW’S VALUE”

What is value? I think it might be kind of subjective. Aaron Spelling has taught us that the numbers 9-0-2-1-0 indicate value, power, and prestige. Those numbers are not just an address indicating Beverly Hills. They have value.

Or not. If you figure in the cost of living, there are other numbers that have much more value. 7-7-0-2-4, for instance. Value is subjective.

No Interest Until 2027, (at which point, if the principle is not paid, the interest becomes due at 35%.) Sorry, not interested. Or maybe this, \$180 bucks a night for two nights in a cheap hotel in disrepair, but it is far enough south that it has electricity because the derecho didn't hit it. Of course, value added by a “complimentary” Continental Breakfast. Which continent? Maybe milk and cookies in Antarctica.

Let's time travel to that day in the Temple, when Jesus points out the Widow's Value.

According to Mark's Gospel, the general culture, didn't value women too much, widows even less. Mark reports Jesus saying, “The scribes devour widow's houses.” (Mark 12:40). We call that predatory banking.

Jesus is watching in the Court of the Women, a barrier of entry into where God is supposed to be, in the worship area containing the Holy of Holies. At the top of the steps into the Temple, there are 13 metal offering receptacles, shaped like trumpets. If you are a woman you can get up there and give, but you can't go in.

It is a noisy place so you hear only the big offerings, as the big coins rattle down the throat of the trumpet. The Widow of Great value had only two coins left. They were called prutahs. They were bronze, smaller and thinner than a dime. 24 of them could buy a loaf of bread. The widow gave 2 coins, about one slice's worth of bread. To any observer other than Jesus, she had no value. Her money didn't even make noise.

An antique One-Armed Bandit, is worth a lot as an antique, and that is all. You have to feed coins in one at a time and then pull the handle. Back in the day, if you put one dime in and then won 10 dimes, it was thrilling, but you barely heard the coins tinkle into the tray. If you put in a silver dollar and won 10 dollars back, they clanked like a noisy money machine gun. Everyone in the casino would hear and they'd stop and marvel. "Wow, that guy is worth a lot, he won!!" He has value

In many ways it is the same, back then as now. The more money, the more value. Hey, there's a store in Austin where you can buy an authentic prutah, just like the Widow's Mite, for only \$320.00. Even in today's economy, you can buy several loaves of bread with that.

The Widow wanted to give. She gave every last bit of monetary value that she had. Why in the world did she give two coins??? One would have been 50% of her worldly possessions, five times a tithe. Giving more than 20% is illegal. But is also illegal to put only one coin of the smallest denomination in the offering plate. What is going on here? Her choices are horrible. She is convicted of financial crime either way. Why did she even show up??? Was it a protest against injustice, being forcibly devalued by the establishment? Maybe someone would notice and be embarrassed by her extreme example of self-giving. Was it her overriding need to be with people in worship of God? Maybe she was giving up and thought that she was soon to, as we euphemistically say, cash in and check out.

It was a valuable act of faith in God's future, in a place and time where any thought of the future was grim and scary.

I saw an estimate that if she'd banked those two prutahs at 4% semi-annually, and lived another 2000 years she'd have 4.8 million trillion dollars. That's a 48 with 17 zeros behind it.

I don't know. Maybe it's not about money at all!

An old farmer went to the bank to get a loan. The banker asked what he had to guarantee it. He mentioned his mule. The banker said, "Describe the mule."

"Well, he's 23 years old, blind in one eye and he ain't got no teeth, and he limps pretty bad, but he's smart."

The banker asked, "What do you keep a mule like that around for?"

The farmer said, "For collateral."

The widow had negative collateral. The scribal bank took her property. Her last cash was given away. She had no value to the world that judged her. But in God's sight, with her two-penny gift, she had ultimate value! The Widow's Value was that she trusted God with her future.

Her gift stamped her with a place in history. The widow threw what would keep her body and soul together into the offering. It was a gift of faithful trust in the future. Of course, she knew that the scribes of the temple had already devoured her house. What little is left, she is determined to not let them take that from her also. She will give it, in faith, perhaps in defiance but most certain that no matter what, she is in God's loving hands.

Maybe she is God's love letter to Jesus. An encouragement, an endorsement, a model for his ultimate sacrifice. This won't be a good weekend for Jesus. Four days after this moment, he will be dead.

Jesus says, "Look at her! What she is doing is, what I am doing." She prefigures the sacrifice of the cross. Jesus's relationship to the temple is like hers; giving all for it. Neither are bitter about the sacrifice. Nothing is taken from them. They gave it!! Both trust God.

The teacher was trying to explain fractions to a young student. So, she posed an easy question from daily life. "Your Mother is baking a pie for the family, six people; your Mom and Dad and four children. That's six. What fraction of the pie will you get?"

The boy quickly answered, "One fifth, Ma'am."

The teacher responded, "You are still not understanding these fractions, now. There are six people."

The boy said, "I understand the fractions, but I know Mom. She'll say she wasn't hungry and didn't want any pie."

The Widow's Value was limitless. She already had everything. She had faith in God, and faith in his hand in her future. She was fearless and safe!

Take what you have and jump wholeheartedly into life. Sometimes you lose.

Sometimes you get blindsided on a deal. You don't get the bang for the buck that you expected, and experience unfairness. Every farmer remembers years when the harvest failed. But that doesn't matter, because you gave it your best shot. You are here another day to praise the Lord!

The widow didn't trust organized religion. She didn't trust government rescue or corporate bailout. She trusted God. She knew that her neighbor, or her children, or kinfolk, or strangers will be the hand of God that gives her what she needs, so she can live life to the fullest, give it all, and dive into the future!"

You can't buy that faith for a million, trillion dollars. The Widow's Value. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us

ELW 707

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

“Sing Praise to God”

arr. C. McClure

THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful*

ELW Hymn 142

THE OFFERING PRAYER

All pray together: Lord Jesus, our portion and our cup, you offered yourself in love for the world, and in this meal, you nourish us with your life. Fill us with your abundance, that we may feed the hungry and welcome the stranger, trusting in your name. 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: Faithful God, you have spread before us a feast of rich food and drink in the body and blood of your Son. Now send us out to labor with you, in service to the world you have made, and among the people you have made your home, in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

THE BLESSING

SENDING SONG

Oh, Happy Day When We Shall Stand

ELW 441

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.*



- ♣ **Rev. Jim Berggren**
- ♣ **Ken Beamesderfer**
- ♣ **Bill Carty**
- ♣ **Vicki Carty**
- ♣ **Linda Cuzzort**
- ♣ **Maureen Fredrickson**
- ♣ **Anna Gardner**
- ♣ **Gloria Guilfoyle**
- ♣ **Larry Harris**
- ♣ **Loy Dell Kaltwasser**
- ♣ **Linda Kuhar**
- ♣ **Bryan Kile**
- ♣ **Nancy Lancaster**
- ♣ **David Magrill**
- ♣ **Kenneth Magrill**
- ♣ **Louise McDonnold**
- ♣ **Gloria McGarvey**
- ♣ **Jeremy Mitchell**
- ♣ **Geraine Moore**
- ♣ **Dorothy Preuss**
- ♣ **Billy Sosa**
- ♣ **Ann Taylor**
- ♣ **Vern Terry**
- ♣ **Jaime Urbanski**
- ♣ **Sharon Wagner**



COUNCIL MEETING

Next Council meeting will be Sunday, **December 1st**, 2024
at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.

Church Council

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING PART I

The Congregational Meeting Part I is scheduled for
Sunday, **December 8th**, 2024, immediately following the 9:30 a.m.
service and after the 6:00 p.m. service on Saturday, **December 7th**.

USHERS

Month: November **Team #** 05 **Leader:** Barbara Neumann

LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS

NOVEMBER

- 3 Reader — Nancy Beamesderfer
 P/E — Julie Kilkenny
- 10 Reader — Charlotte Jaster
 P/E — Nancy Beamesderfer
- 17 Reader — Alice Braun
 P/E — Sharon Wagner
- 24 Reader — Jay Fort
 P/E — Wendy Lambeth

P/E stands for Prayers and Eucharist

Nancy Beamesderfer

FRIENDSHIP CLUB

The Friendship Club **will NOT meet** in November and December.

We will resume meeting
the third Saturday of each month in January, 2025.

Nancy Beamesderfer

THANKOFFERING

November 9, and 10, 2024

The idea of collecting in small offering boxes goes back to the very early 1800's when women formed "mite" or "cent" societies to raise money.

Lutheran women were given small Thankoffering boxes to place in a special location in their homes as a visible reminder of blessings received. Women would add coins to those boxes almost daily as particular blessings were noted. From their use came the idea of an annual church service(s) to celebrate their collection.

Thankoffering shows gratitude for God's blessings and gives the women an important and tangible way to express their gratitude. It is a tradition grounded in our celebration of community, of meeting together to joy- fully give thanks for what God has given us. Thankofferings have always been and still are our opportunity to say thank you to God in both significant and ordinary moments.

Saturday, **November 9**, and Sunday **November 10**, will be Thankoffering days. The women of Holy Cross are encouraged to express their thankfulness by donating "coins" and/or items for the East Spring Branch Food Pantry during worship service. In addition to food items, the food pantry could also use personal care items such as toothbrushes, tooth paste, deodorant, shampoo and other hair products.

Nancy Beamesderfer

HEALTH AND SAFETY DISCUSSION

We will be presenting a Health and Safety discussion on **November 10**, during Coffee Hour after church. John Lambeth will talk about the basics of CPR and choking, warning signs of strokes, and diabetic emergencies.

He'll show us how and when to use the AED that the church has, and he'll talk about the other monitors the church has.

A signup sheet will be posted in the atrium. There will be a space to request we cover certain specific topics if you have questions about them, or if there are topics you would like to see addressed, please email John at jmlambeth@gmail.com, and he will include them in his discussion. This is an important subject that can affect any of us at any time and we hope this time will be of benefit to all of us.

Wendy Lambeth

WELCOME

We welcome Pastor Chris Rothharpt
as he will be preaching the sermon today.

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

CLASS	DAY	DATE	TIME
Adult CPR *CPR only (\$79) *CPR + First Aid (\$92)	Sunday Sunday Sunday	10/20/2024 11/17/2024 12/22/2024	1 pm — 4:30 pm 1 pm — 4:30 pm 1 pm — 4:30 pm
Adult & Pediatric CPR *CPR only (\$85) *CPR + First Aid (\$99)	Saturday Saturday Saturday Saturday Saturday	10/12/2024 10/26/2024 11/9/2024 12/14/2024 12/28/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm 1 pm — 5:30 pm 1 pm — 5:30 pm 1 pm — 5:30 pm 1 pm — 5:30 pm
Basic Life Support (Healthcare Providers and Professional Rescuers) (\$89)	Friday Saturday Friday Saturday Saturday Friday Saturday	10/11/2024 10/19/2024 11/8/2024 11/16/2024 11/23/2024 12/13/2024 12/21/2024	1 pm — 5:30 pm 1 pm — 5:30 pm 1 pm — 5:30 pm 1 pm — 5:30 pm 1 pm — 5:30 pm 1 pm — 5:30 pm 1 pm — 5:30 pm
CPR Instructor Course (\$299)	Friday Saturday Friday	10/4/2024 11/2/2024 12/6/2024	9 am — 5:30 pm 9 am — 5:30 pm 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

“THANKOFFERING SUNDAY”

- 9:30 a.m.** *Traditional Worship service with Pastor Chris Rothharpt –WC*
Nursery is available for small children during the service – Crib Room
- 10:30 a.m.** *Coffee fellowship following the service –FLC*
- 10:30 a.m.** *Health & Safety Discussion --FLCA*
- All Day** *Boy Scouts project / FLC kitchen*

THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS

11 Mon	12 Tues	13 Wed	14 Thurs	15 Fri	16 Sat
<p>11—12 pm <i>ELC Chapel –WC</i></p>	<p>11—12 pm <i>ELC Chapel –WC</i></p> <p>7—8 pm <i>Boy Scouts meeting- FLC room</i></p>	<p>10 am <i>Roundtable Group –VR</i></p> <p>11 am <i>Choir Rehearsal –CL</i></p> <p><i>No Bible Study today</i></p>	<p>12—3 pm <i>Cooking class –FLC kitchen</i></p> <p>1 pm <i>Ruth Circle-FLCA</i></p> <p>8 pm <i>AA Women mtg. –FLCA</i></p>		<p>All Day - Boy Scouts –FLC Kitchen -----</p> <p>1—5:30 pm <i>SST BLS –MR/YR</i></p> <p>4:30 pm <i>Guitar class –CR</i></p> <p>6:00 pm <i>Saturday Informal Service –AT</i></p>

NOV. 1-30 FOOD PANTRY – THANKSGIVING FOOD STORAGE - FLC

AT =Atrium, CL=Choir Loft, CR=Choir Room, 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

