

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

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Rev. Jim Berggren

January 12th, 2025

Baptism of Our Lord

WORSHIP SERVICE

PRELUDE

GATHERING SONG

Shall We Gather at the River

ELW 423

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: **Almighty God, you anointed Jesus at his baptism with the Holy Spirit and revealed him as your beloved Son. Keep all who are born of water and the Spirit faithful in your service, that we may rejoice to be called children of God, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

January 12, 2025 – Baptism of Our Lord

FIRST READING: Isaiah 43:1-7

Restoration and Protection Promised

But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. ²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. ³For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. ⁴Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life. ⁵Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; ⁶I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, ⁷everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

The word of the Lord.

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

THE PSALM

Psalm 29

SECOND READING: Acts 8:14-17

¹⁴ Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samar'ia had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, ¹⁵ who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; ¹⁶ for it had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

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 Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

¹⁵ As the people were in expectation, and all men questioned in their hearts concerning John, whether perhaps he was the Christ, ¹⁶ John answered them all, "I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

The Baptism of Jesus

²¹ Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form, as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased."

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

YOUTUBE VIDEO – https://youtu.be/WVgfER7ZP9Y?si=Lq4oz9fEg_8WBNCJ

Sermon Rev. Jim Berggren

EPIPHANY 1C, Baptism of Our Lord. 1-12-25, Lk 3.15-17, 21-22

THE MESS IN MESSIAH

Sam Houston, born 221 years ago in 1793, was the first President of the Republic of Texas. He was also, in 1827, the Governor of Tennessee, the only man to preside as Executive Office over two of our United States. He was a founder, a rounder and a rough customer. 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, a close friend. He was a drinker and 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 fighter, personally, politically and militarily. His first marriage lasted 3 months. His second marriage was to Margaret Lea, a devout Texas Baptist. She changed his life. Love changed his life. With her support and help, he made a commitment to Christ.

His baptism was arranged for November 19, 1854. He was baptized by Pastor Rufus C. Burlison, the pastor of Independence Baptist Church and the 2nd and 6th President of Baylor. In his last term as Baylor President, in 1886, he was instrumental in making Baylor a Coeducational College. He presided over 61-year-old, Sam Houston's baptism in the "Baptizing Hole", on Rocky Creek, south of College Station. Baylor in its earliest years was near Bryan, Texas. 250 people were there to watch and celebrate as a cold front blew in from the northeast. Pastor Burlison 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 Burlison 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 colorful language, 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. Early Church Father, Irenaeus, fighting the heresy of Gnosticism called this, "The Scandal of the Incarnation."

To the untrained eye, I am sure that Jesus looked pretty messy too. Really. Is that what God taking human form is supposed to look like? Common ideas of the attributes of messiahs were idealized impossibilities. Jesus came as an authentic Messiah. He 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. We try to look good with virtue signaling, we show off our wealth with conspicuous consumption. These are forms of Cultural Indulgences and self-validation. We could use a little Reformation here!

We make heroes of those who seem exempt from the usual problems of life, and we grudgingly and jealously, admire those who have privilege. Celebrity sets a standard that is impossible to realize, and occasionally fatal to attempt, especially if you are the celebrity. It can get out of hand with stimulants for performance in the public eye, and depressants for sleep.

Perhaps it is harder for celebrities than it is for Mr. and Ms. 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 are and the image projected. There's a big difference between a mirror and a camera. Everybody's got a kink in their slinky. We call that Original Sin. You can cover up the kink in your slinky with a camera, but you can't fix it. Only the Lord God Almighty can with His Grace. Let's face it. Although exemption and privilege are fondly held dreams, there is no such thing as permanent entitlement.

Hope is not bad. Dreams and ambitions are motivating. Realistic privileges 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, but Jesus surprised him. Jesus didn't ride into the wilderness on a big white horse leading an army. What a shock, that he got down in the mud with everyone else to be baptized. Jesus entered into the mess in solidarity through his baptism. He put the Mess in Messiah.

Things are never as good as we would have hoped they could be. That's reality. The world is a mess. That's nothing new. It always has been a mess. Ancient writings of the Assyrian Empire indicate that the ruling generation worried about the quality of the next generation to come into power. Those kids!!!!

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. Will the next charismatic ruler 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 dictate justice and save us all from the mess.

Would you be interested in researching this? Do you want to know about all 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 perfect privileges. Super heroes with super skills and super ambitions to save Gotham and indeed the whole Universe, abound. All are exempt from one or more of the limiting features of life. They are above the mess.

Superman is lucky. He's exempt from gravity. Gravity gets us all, sooner or later. The Human Torch, (the flame-on guy) in the Fantastic Four, never has to worry about starting a fire or finding a match. A couple of decades ago, I was driving, and feeling around in the truck console, carefully keeping my eyes and my mind on the road. I grabbed what felt like a lighter, and inadvertently maced myself. Apparently, someone in my family thought that a personal container of pepper spray might come in handy in a road rage encounter. The combination of tear gas and pepper spray was amazing. Another incentive to quit smoking.

For their part, both Batman and Spiderman never have to worry about traffic. They are above it all: And they fight crime and clean up urban messes. Wouldn't it be nice to be a part of the Justice League, or Guardians of The Galaxy, and help them enforce a "NO MESS" policy against the Legion of Doom?

The wish dreams of ambitious political philosophers throughout the millennia have not made any better sense and their intended or unintended consequences for human life have been devastating. 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. The guillotine was definitely savage, but not very noble. It remained France's standard method of judicial execution until 1981 when capital punishment was abolished in France.

In contrast, the American Revolution proceeded on the assumption that all people are messy; (There is that Original Sin thing popping up again) but if free, the people will choose to work toward their own advantage, and their own dream. It makes common sense. It may seem self-serving, but in the process, people will make life better for themselves and the people around them. If you decapitate someone,

you just lost a customer, and his family and friends. That's not good business. These are the inner thoughts of our wise founders, as they sought a better way to make it possible for people to govern themselves, in a civilized manner. It is simple. 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 is accustomed to that, and that's why he sent his son, Jesus. To put a little mess back in Messiah. To make God real for everyone.

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.

One thing I love about God is that he is not embodied in a pretentious fake messiah, a tyrant in an earthly kingdom. I love that in creating reality, he is absolutely faithful 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 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 OF THE DAY

We Three Kings of Orient Are

power point

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

Praise to the Lord

from the Erneverten Gesangbuch

THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful*

ELW Hymn 142

THE OFFERING PRAYER

All pray together: God of grace, your love reaches to the heavens, and your abundance to the depths of the seas. Bless what we offer to your service: our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts. Let us overflow with gratitude and generosity, now and always. 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

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: Nourishing God, at this table you have refreshed us with holy gifts of food and drink. Strengthen us for service and send us out to embody your good news of liberation and healing for the sake of the world. In the name of Christ, we pray.

Congregation: Amen.

THE BLESSING

SENDING SONG

Crashing Waters at Creation

ELW 455

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.*



- ♣ **Alberto Basurto**
- ♣ **Bill Carty**
- ♣ **Vicki Carty**
- ♣ **Maureen Fredrickson**
- ♣ **Anna Gardner**
- ♣ **Nancy Lancaster**
- ♣ **David Magrill**
- ♣ **Kenneth Magrill**
- ♣ **Louise McDonnold**
- ♣ **Gloria McGarvey**
- ♣ **Jeremy Mitchell**
- ♣ **Geraine Moore**
- ♣ **Dorothy Preuss**
- ♣ **Tommy Roberts**
- ♣ **Ann Taylor**
- ♣ **Jaime Urbanski**



COUNCIL MEETING

Next Council meeting will be Sunday, **January 19th**, 2024
at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.

Church Council

USHERS

Month: January

Team # 03

Leader: Linda Cuzzort

LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS

JANUARY

- 5 Reader — Jay Fort
P/E — Julie Kilkenny
- 12 Reader — Mallory Hileman
P/E — Penny Schick
- 19 Reader — Charlotte Jaster
P/E — Sharon Wagner
- 26 Reader — Ike Thompson
P/E — John Stokes

P/E stands for Prayers and Eucharist

Nancy Beamesderfer

FRIENDSHIP CLUB

The Friendship Club will be meeting Saturday, **January 18, 2025**,
at 3:00 pm in the Annex.

This will be a pot luck gathering so be sure to bring a favorite dish
to share along with ideas for future meetings.

You no longer need to be 55 in order to attend Friendship Club as we are no longer
able to secure the precinct buses for trips.

Nancy Beamesderfer

EARLY LEARNING CENTER

For the entire month of January, Fratelli's is sponsoring "spirit days/nights" for Holy Cross ELC. Ten percent (10%) of each order that mentions Holy Cross ELC will go back to the school for our spring fundraiser.

Mallory Hileman

SAFEGUARDS SAFETY TRAINING HOLYCROSS COUPON CODE FOR 15% DISCOUNT: HCLC2025			
CLASS	DAY	DATE	TIME
Adult CPR *CPR only (\$79) *CPR + First Aid (\$92)	Sunday Sunday Sunday	1/19/2025 2/16/2025 3/16/2025	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	1/11/2025 2/08/2025 2/22/2025 3/08/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm 1 pm — 5:30 pm 1 pm — 5:30 pm 1 pm — 5:30 pm
Basic Life Support (BLS) (for Healthcare Providers and Professional Rescuers) (\$89)	Friday Saturday Saturday Friday Saturday Friday Saturday Saturday	1/10/2025 1/18/2025 1/25/2025 2/07/2025 2/15/2025 3/07/2025 3/15/2025 3/22/2025	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 1 pm — 5:30 pm
CPR Instructor Course (\$299)	Saturday Friday Saturday Friday	1/04/2025 1/31/2025 3/01/2025 3/28/2025	9 am — 5:30 pm 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

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

13 Mon	14 Tues	15 Wed	16 Thurs	17 Fri	18 Sat
<p>11—12 pm ELC Chapel —WC</p> <p>7—8 pm Boy Scouts mtg /FLC room</p>	<p>11—12 pm ELC Chapel —WC</p> <p>6:30—8 pm Basketball Team Travis —FLC</p>	<p>10—12 pm ELC KiM —FLC</p> <p>10 am Roundtable group—VR</p> <p>11 am Choir practice —CL</p> <p>12 pm Bible Study —AT</p> <p>7—8:30 pm Basketball Team Jay & Michael —FLC</p>	<p>9:30—12 pm LWR —FLCA</p> <p>10—12 pm ELC KiM —FLC</p> <p>6:30—8 pm Basketball Team Seth —FLC</p> <p>8 pm AA Women mtg. —FLCA</p>		<p>1—5:30 pm SST BLS —MR/YR</p> <p>3 pm Friendship Club —FLCA</p> <p>6:00 pm Saturday Informal Service —AT</p>

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