

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

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713-686-8254

Rev. Jim Berggren

February 2nd, 2025

4th Sunday after Epiphany

WORSHIP SERVICE

PRELUDE

GATHERING SONG

God of Grace and God of Glory

ELW 705

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 and ever-living God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and love; and that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.***

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

February 2nd, 2025 – 4th Sunday After Epiphany

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 1:4-10

Jeremiah's Call and Commission

⁴Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, ⁵“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” ⁶Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.” ⁷But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’; for to all to whom I send you you shall go, and whatever I command you you shall speak. ⁸Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.” ⁹Then the LORD put forth his hand and touched my mouth; and the LORD said to me, “Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. ¹⁰See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”

The word of the Lord.

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

THE PSALM Psalm 71:1-6

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

The Gift of Love

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned,^[a] but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; ⁵ it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸ Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. ¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. ¹³ So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

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 4:21-30**

²¹ And he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” ²² And all spoke well of him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth; and they said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” ²³ And he said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Physician, heal yourself; what we have heard you did at Caper’na-um, do here also in your own country.’” ²⁴ And he said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country. ²⁵ But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Eli’jah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; ²⁶ and Eli’jah was sent to none of them but only to Zar’ephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. ²⁷ And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Eli’sha; and none of them was cleansed, but only Na’aman the Syrian.” ²⁸ When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. ²⁹ And they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. ³⁰ But passing through the midst of them he went away.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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

YOUTUBE VIDEO – <https://youtu.be/TMT772aCLDU?si=LazM-dbaIorAWGoT>

Sermon Rev. Jim Berggren

EPIPHANY 4C, 2-2-25, Jeremiah 1.4-8

ONLY

In the church office, we receive at least ten calls daily, which are solicitation calls for insurance, medical programs, changing phone companies, buying some product, whatever. Answering them is distracting and aggravating. We keep a list of offending numbers to identify these calls, or listen for a subhuman bing indicating connection with a machine. If the phone persecutors happen to fake us out, we answer by saying, "Holy Cross Lutheran. This is a church. Do you need help?" Then we get to interrupt a canned spiel, by saying, "This line must remain open for emergencies. Remove this number from your call list. You are potentially endangering lives." On the off chance that God or the Bishop might be on the other end of the line, we don't want to be offensive.

If God is really God, can he call you, and it be a wrong number? When God calls young Jeremiah to be his prophet, it sounds suspiciously like David's song of Psalm 139. Paul Tillich in his meditation of Psalm 139 said, "Man desires to escape God...men of all kinds, prophets and reformers, saints and atheists, believers and unbelievers, have the same experience. It is safe to say that a person who has never tried to flee God has never experienced the God Who is really God."

God calls. He says, "Jeremiah, I have appointed you to be my prophet to the nations." Jeremiah says, "Must be a wrong number. I don't do public speaking. I am only a boy. I am afraid of powerful nations. They will destroy me if I speak against them." God says, "Work starts now. I've got you covered." He was probably 12-14 years old. Same age as Jesus in the Temple. Same age as David up against Goliath. Seriously, can you imagine our government accepting advice from a 13-year-old kid with a voice that cracks at the wrong time?

As much as we lift up our youth culture, the young are still discounted. Nicholas Sandmann, who walked with his parochial school classmates in a March for Life parade, in Washington D.C., was marginalized and slandered for just standing there and saying nothing. His silence spoke volumes.

Rodney Dangerfield used to tell of his troubled childhood. He said, "They sent me to a child psychiatrist. And I must say, the kid didn't help a bit."

God told Jeremiah, "Don't say, 'I am only...', I will help you to succeed. Or to quote Muhammad Ali, "Stay in college, get the knowledge, and stay there until you are through. If they can make penicillin out of moldy bread, they can sure make something out of you."

A child was born to a family where the father had no formal school at all. His mother was a teacher. His IQ was 81, 2 points above officially challenged. Hopeless. He tried school for 3 months and was withdrawn. Then he got scarlet fever and was going deaf. He was emotionally stunted and closed off from human interaction. He did like taking things apart, and playing with fire which resulted in burning down his father's barn. He didn't speak well, but he did want to be a railroad engineer. There are a lot of "he- was-onlys" in there, including, he was only Thomas A. Edison. He only had 1,093 U. S. Patents in his name.

It seems that God fitted this young man with pre-natal power and purpose which was potential and promise for our nation and the whole world.

Don't forget that God is always taking what we consider as a little bit, and making a whole lot out of it. Human reservations, human fears and human inertia, just clog up the free fulfillment of God's will for our lives. That's like postponing the blessings that are yours

Moses was only a shepherd stutterer, but he freed a nation by arguing with an evil and powerful pharaoh. It was only a slingshot, but Goliath fell for it. He was only a mama's boy, but Jacob wrestled with God and fathered 12 tribes. It was only 5 loaves and two fish, but Jesus fed over 5000. Funny, how God is real consistent about doing stuff like that.

I am only.... deadly words. God won't let us get by with saying them. Marilyn vos Savant has reputedly the highest IQ measured by the Stanford-Binet test. 228. She had a column where people asked her questions, some of them questions obviously designed to pit themselves against her intelligence. One man wrote, "I think our purpose is only to pursue happiness in any way possible, regardless of means. What do you think?"

Marilyn answered, "If there is an intelligent Creator with a plan for the universe, then our purpose is directed and empowered by our Creator. If there is no Creator and life is random evolution, there is no purpose." You decide.

God had a plan for Jeremiah, and he helped it to happen despite Jeremiah's protestation that he was only a kid. God has a plan for humanity, even though we sometimes use that for an excuse for blunders and big mistakes, "After all, I am only human." Only human? You mean, right up there with angels, only human?"

God's enhanced, Creation 2.0 plan includes for the first time, the first words that are spoken by creatures, thus distinguishing humans from all other denizens of creation. Not a human word is spoken in the Bible until Genesis 2:19. That is where God expresses his pre-natal purpose for us all as he coaxes the first words out of Adam, who doubtlessly protested, "I am only an animal."

"No. You name animals. You care for them. You are human."

Our speaking begins when we name the created things, thus responding to the God who coaxes us into the stewardship of his creation, and responding to the amazing gifts that God has given us.

Genesis 2:18-23 is the beginning of our God -created-privilege, simply in the act of speaking. The mouth is the organ which distinguishes humanity above all creatures. The organ of speech, the capacity for language is the essential condition for humanity. Apparently, Mom was on to something when she would admonish, "Use your words! Don't pull that 'I-am-only -a-helpless-victim' stuff on me.

In 1972, I worked for three months, with a young woman who was told she would never be a pastor because she was only a woman. We were co-chaplains, on a Clinical Pastoral Education team, serving in a reform school for girls, 12-18 years of age. She was a wise young woman. Carter was one of the first women to be ordained, in the Episcopal church in the United States. She described how the first time she served communion, when she handed a male priest the host, he gouged her hand cutting her palm open, with his fingernail, making her bleed. The stigmata of the saints.

One Sunday she did pulpit supply in a country parish, upstate Pennsylvania, that had never seen a woman pastor. She reported that after the service, one man, baiting her, shook her hand and said, "You preach purty good for a woman." She smiled and replied, "You listen pretty well for a man."

Fact is, God has as pre-natal plan for all of us. We all have within us power and purpose from God maybe still waiting to be released. Instead of, "I am only," we can say, "I am a child of God. Before I was formed in the womb, God knew me. Before I was born, I was set apart for something good and beautiful, and noble. No excuses. Honor the gifts God has given you that you haven't even noticed yet. A call from God is not a wrong number! You are part of God's Plan!

To believe that about ourselves, is to unleash a host of powers and possibilities. I am only, does not compute. A dewdrop does God's will as much as a thunderstorm. We are children of God with purpose! Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY *Although I Speak with Angel's Tongue*

LW 644

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

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

Go, My Children, with My Blessing

ELW 543

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**
- ♣ **David Dupleth**
- ♣ **Maureen Fredrickson**
- ♣ **Anna Gardner**
- ♣ **Bryan Kile**
- ♣ **Nancy Lancaster**
- ♣ **Darnell Lucero**
- ♣ **David Magrill**
- ♣ **Kenneth Magrill**
- ♣ **Tracy Makris**
- ♣ **Louise McDonnold**
- ♣ **Gloria McGarvey**
- ♣ **Jeremy Mitchell**
- ♣ **Geraine Moore**
- ♣ **Dorothy Preuss**
- ♣ **Tommy Roberts**
- ♣ **Steve Schulze**
- ♣ **Ann Taylor**
- ♣ **Jaime Urbanski**

**Family and Friends of Vicky Carty
upon completion of her life's mission.**



Next

COUNCIL MEETING

Council meeting will be Sunday, **February 23rd**, 2024
at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.

Church Council

USHERS

Month: February **Team #** 04 **Leader:** Julie Kilkenny

LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS

FEBRUARY

- 2 Reader — Scott Wegner
 P/E — Nancy Beamesderfer
- 9 Reader — Alma Byerly
 P/E — Jay Byerly
- 16 Reader — Linda Cuzzort
 P/E — Steve Schulze
- 23 Reader — Charlotte Jaster
 P/E — Nancy Beamesderfer

P/E stands for Prayers and Eucharist

Nancy Beamesderfer

CROSS WALL

During the Holidays, the Cross Wall grew!!

We had several church members donate crosses.
It was decided to add those beautiful crosses
to the pastoral wall for past Pastoral Staff.

IN HONOR OF

Pastor Otto Hesla	1954—1956
Pastor Louis Smith	1961—1967
Associate Pastor Rowland Chandler	1964—1966
Associate Pastor David Stuck	1966—1968
Associate Pastor Don Little	1970
Associate Pastor Victor Nelson	1976—1980
Pastor Richard Kling	1978—1980
Pastor Ed Bersagel	1980—1982
Deaconess Doreen Leptien Scheuermann	1994—1997
Pastor John Boldt	1998—2000
Pastor George Bement	2001—2004

IN MEMORY OF

LaVerne Pivonka

DONATED BY

Her family

Leigh Ann Rothharpt

Blessings,

Upcycled Crafty Ladies

CELEBRATION OF MEMBERSHIP

In appreciation for all of our faithful and hardworking congregation, and in special thanks to those who have most recently joined us in worship and service, we will gather in joy for a celebration of Membership on Sunday, **February 16**.

There will be a reception after the service at the coffee hour in the Family Life Center.

Pr. Jim Berggren

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

3 Mon	4 Tues	5 Wed	6 Thurs	7 Fri	8 Sat
<p>11—12 pm ELC Chapel —YR</p>	<p>11—12 pm ELC Chapel —YR</p> <p>5—6 pm Basketball Team Tim—FLC</p> <p>7—8 pm Boy Scouts mtg /FLC room</p>	<p>9 am Men's Breakfast 10—12 ELC KiM —FLC</p> <p>11 am Choir practice —CL 12 pm Bible Study —AT</p> <p>7—8:30 pm Basketball Team Jay & Michael-FLC</p>	<p>10—12 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>8 am—1 pm Lovebug's Children Business Fair —FLC, FLCA, YR, and Parking lot.</p> <p>1—5:30 pm SST Adult & Pediatric CPR —MR/YR</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