

# Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

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713-686-8254

Rev. Jim Berggren

March 16, 2025

Second Sunday in Lent

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## WORSHIP SERVICE

### PRELUDE

### GATHERING SONG

*Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*

ELW 834

### 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

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: The Lord be with you.

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

P: Let us pray, together.

C: *God of the covenant, in the mystery of the cross you promise everlasting life to the world. Gather all peoples into your arms, and shelter us with your mercy, that we may rejoice in the life we share in 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

**March 16, 2025 – Second Sunday in Lent**

### **FIRST READING: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18**

#### **God's Covenant with Abram**

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”<sup>2</sup> But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Elie’zer of Damascus?”<sup>3</sup> And Abram said, “Behold, thou hast given me no offspring; and a slave born in my house will be my heir.”<sup>4</sup> And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, “This man shall not be your heir; your own son shall be your heir.”<sup>5</sup> And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”<sup>6</sup> And he believed the LORD; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness.

<sup>7</sup> And he said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chalde’ans, to give you this land to possess.”<sup>8</sup> But he said, “O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?”<sup>9</sup> He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a she-goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.”<sup>10</sup> And he brought him all these, cut them in two, and laid each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two.<sup>11</sup> And when birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.<sup>12</sup> As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram; and lo, a dread and great darkness fell upon him.

<sup>17</sup> When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. <sup>18</sup> On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,

*The word of the Lord.*

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

## **THE PSALM**

## **Psalm 27**

### **SECOND READING: Philippians 3:17—4:1**

<sup>17</sup> Brethren, join in imitating me, and mark those who so live as you have an example in us. <sup>18</sup> For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, live as enemies of the cross of Christ. <sup>19</sup> Their end is destruction, their god is the belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. <sup>20</sup> But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself.

**4** Therefore, my brethren, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

*The word of the Lord.*

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

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:**

*Return to the Lord, your God.  
Return for he is gracious and merciful,  
slow in anger,  
and abounding in steadfast love,  
and abounding in steadfast love.*

## **THE HOLY GOSPEL Luke 13:31-35**

### **The Lament over Jerusalem**

<sup>31</sup> At that very hour some Pharisees came, and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” <sup>32</sup> And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish

my course.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.’<sup>34</sup> O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!<sup>35</sup> Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

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

**YOUTUBE VIDEO – [https://youtu.be/xq-QN-NUNxo?si=jbSy\\_K2FD6K\\_eEmc](https://youtu.be/xq-QN-NUNxo?si=jbSy_K2FD6K_eEmc)**

## **Sermon Rev. Jim Berggren**

**LENT 2C, 3-16-25, PHILIPPIANS 3:20-21**

### **DUAL CITIZENSHIP**

Father Bill and I were both on a budget: Vows of poverty, you know. We couldn't afford the day rate for parking in a guarded lot, so we parked off of Franklin Street, five blocks south of the Harris County Jail, every Tuesday, our assigned day to do spiritual counseling with both inmates and deputies. We affectionately called our mostly feared parking neighborhood, Beirut, Houston.

One morning, Father Bill was accosted by a man with a sad-looking Saturday Night Special, held together with duct tape. The man demanded his wallet. Father Bill said, “Take it easy. No one's gonna get hurt here. Please point your gun toward the ground, and I am slowly getting my wallet out of my inside jacket pocket.” As he slowly opened his jacket up reaching for his wallet, the man saw his clerical collar for the first time.

The thief blanched and exclaimed, “I'm so sorry Father, I didn't know you were a priest. Please forgive me. Please!”

Father Bill said, “That's ok, but if you're counting on that raggedy gun, somebody's gonna get hurt.” “Look, my friend, while I have my jacket open, I have an extra cigar. We could have a smoke together here for a little bit, and talk.”

The would-be thief exclaimed, “Oh thank you Father, so much, but no thank you. I can't. I gave up smoking for Lent.” There is a couple of widely differing world views!!!

Tony Hendra, contributor to National Lampoon said, “There are two types of people: Those who classify people into two types, and those who don’t.” Mark Twain posited three groups: Commonplace, remarkable and lunatics. I suppose a creative person could be all three at the same time. Paul, in Philippians, explains that there are two aspects to every Christian life: We are citizens of the world and citizens of heaven. Living in a Body of Humiliation, anticipating a Body of Glory.

As citizens of the world, we are subject to all the changes that happen to people in the world: fear, danger, frustration, perplexity, the wearing out of our physical body, tempting pleasures and crippling pain, meaningful work, and totally random unpredictable events for which there is no plan.

As citizens of heaven, we proclaim that God is there for us with love, that every experience of this life has meaning, and that we will be transformed as we move through all the phases of eternal life. God calls us to look toward Him and improvise when we are blocked and stumped by our earthly citizenship.

One weeknight in New York City, David Hadju, journalist, dropped into the Village Vanguard to relax and hear some jazz. He wrote about his experience in the March, 2003 issue of *Atlantic Monthly*. Everyone was surprised when Wynton Marsalis, ruler of the jazz trumpet universe, stepped up on stage from the audience, and asked the band to back him on the song, “I Don’t Stand a Ghost of a Chance With You.” It is a melancholy song, which he played with murmurs and sighs and heartbreakingly smooth emotional legato runs. At the end the words were sobbing through his horn. “I don’t stand..... a ghost.... of a chance..... the club was enthralled, people were suspending their breath, and a cell phone burst forth with its irritating default tune, before the last two notes of Marsalis’ perfect rendition.

Wynton just stood there and smiled. The cell phone owner ran out of the club, embarrassed. Nervous conversation and the clinking of glasses started up. The performance was aborted. But no. He put the trumpet to his lips and played the stupid cell-phone melody note for note. He began variations on the tune, changed keys, changed tempo, the quintet was right there with him like they had practiced this a thousand times. After several heavenly minutes of cell-phone trash tune lifted up into a new world, through brilliant improvisation, Marsalis came back to the ballad and finished, “I don’t stand.....a ghost.....of a chance.....with you.”

A shattering interruption for a citizen of earth, a moment of glory for a citizen of heaven. A citizen of heaven can improvise fearlessly, with flexibility because of the assurance of God’s acceptance. A citizen of heaven can accept reality. A citizen of heaven knows that everything has meaning and one day God, who loves us, will reveal it all to us. A citizen of heaven can move forward into transformation trusting in God’s will. Is that cocoon the grave clothes of a dead worm, or the

baptismal garment of a new butterfly?

Our body of humiliation, becomes our body of his glory, transformed through the power of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Our setbacks are transformed into joys. Painful interruptions become moments of glory. God doesn't give us a pretty little tune with no surprises, no tension and no challenge. He is with us to show us how failure can redeem, even the catastrophic result of a cross.

Richard Luster, my 8<sup>th</sup> grade art teacher changed my life. He couldn't help but notice that I couldn't even draw a stick man. I was afraid, paralyzed, art was not fun. So, he assigned me to go to the Sandzen Art Gallery, and write anything about any painting once a week. Describe it. Tell what I thought the artist saw or was thinking, or trying to communicate. How did I feel looking at it? Anything. Just give him a page of words about a work of art, once a week.

Then he saw me sharpening my pencil with my pocket knife in class, so, for the final project, he assigned me to write a short story and illustrate it by whittling on one side of a block of balsa wood, inking it and pressing it on paper. A wood block etching. Everyone else in class is coloring and drawing and playing with clay, and here I am writing and whittling and smearing ink on a board.

But by pressing the carved board on paper, the image came out, abstract, but interesting. I was tentatively proud. And then one of the guys splattered ink on my work. I was crushed and angry. It was ruined. I was going to destroy it, and give up, but Mr. Luster said, "Wait. A messy world is what makes art. You have an opportunity to connect the ink splats, anyway you want with a pen. Something beautiful will emerge. You will create something new, never seen before. Your experience will be on that paper. It is your art." Mr. Luster taught a dolt, about woodblock printing an art technique from 1800 years ago in China.

When Paul wrote about citizenship in heaven, he was writing to the congregation in Philippi. Their experience was that Roman citizenship was highly coveted. Philippi was a retirement community for soldiers who had served their time. Veterans of campaigns and battles, they were awarded Roman citizenship. The strong Roman culture influenced clothes, government, language, diet, education and moral values. Residents of Philippi were always aware of their Roman citizenship or their desire to attain Roman citizenship. Paul takes the opportunity to remind them of an even higher calling to citizenship in heaven.

Chuck Colson in his book, *Loving God*, tells of Mickey Cohen, Los Angeles gangster in the 40's, who claimed to be converted to Christianity. But he never changed his behavior or his mob connections. When asked about that, he said, "You didn't tell me I had to give up my career. There are Christian movie stars, Christian athletes, Christian lawyers. What's the matter with being a Christian

gangster? If I have to give that up, count me out.” Kinda like that ‘stick-up man’ not smoking for Lent. Not quite ready yet for the transformation of his body of humiliation into citizenship in heaven, a body of Glory. He was stuck.

Resilient people who accept the difficulties of citizenship on earth, and anticipate the joy of citizenship in heaven, have three great things going for them: They accept reality even when it is awkward, or inconvenient. Against all odds, in the face of despair, they believe that life is meaningful. And they can improvise and bounce back from mistakes and hardship, using that experience for transformation. We are transformed in Christ. Rejoice in your heavenly citizenship. Enjoy your Dual Citizenship! Amen.

**HYMN OF THE DAY**     *Lord Christ, When First You Came to Earth*

**ELW 727**

### **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

*In the Cross of Christ I Glory*

ELW 324

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.*



- ♣ **Lynn Ballard**
- ♣ **Alberto Basurto**
- ♣ **Bill Carty**
- ♣ **David Dupleth**
- ♣ **Maureen Fredrickson**
- ♣ **Eliseo Gonzales**
- ♣ **Anna Gardner**
- ♣ **Mike Hodges**
- ♣ **Nancy Lancaster**
- ♣ **David Magrill**
- ♣ **Kenneth Magrill**
- ♣ **Tracy Makris**
- ♣ **Gloria McGarvey**
- ♣ **Jeremy Mitchell**
- ♣ **Geraine Moore**
- ♣ **Dorothy Preuss**
- ♣ **Steve Schulze**
- ♣ **Glenda Suarez**
- ♣ **George Schwalm**
- ♣ **Jaime Urbanski**



## **COUNCIL MEETING**

Council meeting will be Sunday, **March 23<sup>rd</sup>**, 2024  
at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.

Church Council

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### **USHERS**

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

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### **LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS**

#### **MARCH**

- 2    Reader — Jay Fort  
      P/E — Julie Kilkenny
- 9    Reader — Steve Schulze  
      P/E — Penny Schick
- 16   Reader — Ike Thompson  
      P/E — Sharon Wagner
- 23   Reader — Russell Ritcher  
      P/E — Alice Braun
- 30   Reader — Linda Cuzzort  
      P/E — Wendy Lambeth

P/E stands for Prayers and Eucharist

Nancy Beamesderfer

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## **LENTEN DEVOTIONAL BOOKLETS**

The Lenten season is here and the daily devotion booklet "The Way, the Truth, and the Life" is available in the Narthex and Atrium.

The daily messages are based on writings from Henri Nouwen. They are short but very meaningful and such a lovely way to prepare for the season. Please pick up a copy. Thank you.

Sharon Wagner

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## **COFFEE FELLOWSHIP**

Each week after Sunday service there is a Coffee Hour in the FLC.

Coffee, tea and even hot chocolate are provided.

Please sign up to bring goodies (cookies, coffee cake, etc.) to snack on.

The sign-up sheet is in the FLC.

Thank you.

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## **PRAYER VIGIL**

This Lenten Season we would like to take time to reflect on the gifts we have received and the sacrifices that have been made in Christ's name.

On Saturday, **April 19<sup>th</sup>**, there will be a Prayer Vigil to do just that.

There is a sign-up sheet in the Atrium; we would like to have people sign up for a given time slot between 9:00 am and 6:00pm. You can come to church and pray in the Chapel or you can commit to pray in your own home.

Hopefully we can have continuous prayers throughout the day!

Wendy Lambeth

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## LENTEN SERVICES IN 2025

Lenten services will be held on Wednesdays  
at 12:00 noon in the Atrium the following dates:

**March 12, 19, 26, 30 and April 2 & 9**

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## LENTEN STUDY

### FOR WEDNESDAY NOON SERVICES

This year we will explore the Lenten study series  
**Words from the Cross** written by Pastor Jim Berggren.

#### Lent 1

March 12: “Today you will be with me in Paradise.” *Luke 23:43*

#### Lent 2

March 19: “Woman, here is your son.” *John 19:26-27a*  
Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.”  
“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” *Matthew 27:46b*

#### Lent 3

March 26: “I am thirsty.” *John 19:28b*

#### Lent 4

April 2: “It is finished.” *John 19:30a*

#### Lent 5

April 9: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” *Luke 23:46*

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## LENTEN MEALS

Each Wednesday after our noonday Lenten service  
there will be a light lunch in the FLC.

Our theme this year will be “bars”. Each week the basics (potatoes, tacos, etc.,)  
will be provided, with members contributing the “add-ons”.

There will also be an ice cream bar each week.

**March 19<sup>th</sup>** : Baked Potato bar  
**March 26<sup>th</sup>** : Taco bar  
**April 2<sup>nd</sup>** : Pasta bar  
**April 9<sup>th</sup>** : Sandwich bar

Please contact Wendy Lambeth to let her know what you'll be bringing (so we won't end up with 5 bags of cheese and no ice cream toppings)!

Wendy Lambeth

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<b>SAFEGUARDS SAFETY TRAINING</b>			
<b>HOLYCROSS COUPON CODE FOR 15% DISCOUNT: HCLC2025</b>			
<b>CLASS</b>	<b>DAY</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>
Adult CPR *CPR only (\$79) *CPR + First Aid (\$92)	Sunday	1/19/2025	1 pm — 4:30 pm
	Sunday	2/16/2025	1 pm — 4:30 pm
	Sunday	3/16/2025	1 pm — 4:30 pm
Adult & Pediatric CPR *CPR only (\$85) *CPR + First Aid (\$99)	Saturday	1/11/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	2/08/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	2/22/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	3/08/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
Basic Life Support (BLS) (for Healthcare Providers and Professional Rescuers) (\$89)	Friday	1/10/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	1/18/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	1/25/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Friday	2/07/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	2/15/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Friday	3/07/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	3/15/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	3/22/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
CPR Instructor Course (\$299)	Saturday	1/04/2025	9 am — 5:30 pm
	Friday	1/31/2025	9 am — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	3/01/2025	9 am — 5:30 pm
	Friday	3/28/2025	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

