

# Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

7901 Westview Dr.

Houston, TX 77055

Tel. 713-686-8253

Website: [www.holycross.us](http://www.holycross.us)

e-mail: [hclc@holycross.us](mailto:hclc@holycross.us)

713-686-8254

Rev. Jim Berggren

April 13, 2025

Palm Sunday

---

## WORSHIP SERVICE

### PRELUDE

### GATHERING SONG

*All Glory, Laud, and Honor*

ELW 344

### 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: *Sovereign God, you have established your rule in the human heart through the servanthood of Jesus Christ. By your Spirit, keep us in the joyful procession of those who with their tongues confess Jesus as Lord and with their lives praise him as Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

## **SCRIPTURE LESSONS**

**April 13, 2025 – Palm Sunday**

### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 50:4-9a**

#### **The Servant's Humiliation and Vindication**

<sup>4</sup>The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him that is weary. Morning by morning he wakens, he wakens my ear to hear as those who are taught.<sup>5</sup>The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I turned not backward. <sup>6</sup>I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I hid not my face from shame and spitting. <sup>7</sup>For the Lord God helps me; therefore, I have not been confounded; therefore, I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; <sup>8</sup>he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me. <sup>9</sup>Behold, the Lord GOD helps me; who will declare me guilty? Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.

*The word of the Lord.*

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

### **THE PSALM**

**Psalm 31:9-16**

**SECOND READING: Philippians 2:5-11**

<sup>5</sup> Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

*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 23:1-49**

**Jesus before Pilate**

Then the whole company of them arose, and brought him before Pilate. <sup>2</sup> And they began to accuse him, saying, “We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ a king.” <sup>3</sup> And Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” And he answered him, “You have said so.” <sup>4</sup> And Pilate said to the chief priests and the multitudes, “I find no crime in this man.” <sup>5</sup> But they were urgent, saying, “He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place.”

**Jesus before Herod**

<sup>6</sup> When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. <sup>7</sup> And when he learned that he belonged to Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. <sup>8</sup> When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him. <sup>9</sup> So he questioned him at some length; but he made no

answer.<sup>10</sup> The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him.<sup>11</sup> And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him; then, arraying him in gorgeous apparel, he sent him back to Pilate.<sup>12</sup> And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other.

### **Jesus Sentenced to Death**

<sup>13</sup> Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,<sup>14</sup> and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him; <sup>15</sup> neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Behold, nothing deserving death has been done by him; <sup>16</sup> I will therefore chastise him and release him.”

<sup>18</sup> But they all cried out together, “Away with this man, and release to us Barab’bas”—<sup>19</sup> a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city, and for murder.<sup>20</sup> Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus; <sup>21</sup> but they shouted out, “Crucify, crucify him!” <sup>22</sup> A third time he said to them, “Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no crime deserving death; I will therefore chastise him and release him.” <sup>23</sup> But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed.<sup>24</sup> So Pilate gave sentence that their demand should be granted.<sup>25</sup> He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, whom they asked for; but Jesus he delivered up to their will.

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

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

**YOUTUBE VIDEO – <https://youtu.be/nhm74S2knEA?si=qgz85ByTcY-VnS2B>**

# Sermon Rev. Jim Berggren

**PALM-PASSION SUNDAY 4-13-25**

**SAVE NOW!**

Did God lose it? Sometimes I wonder. Things don't make sense. He seems to act in a manner inconsistent with usual human expectations. Holy Week is the most important 7 days in the history of the known universe, (outside of the first 7 days of Creation) and it looks like God is losing the on-going battle between God's Will and his precious gift of human free will.

First of all, he is not kingly enough. I mean, if we want to hire a professional to save our souls, we want him to look like a Pro. People got really nervous when the newly elected congressman showed up to work in crocs, cut-offs and a tie-dye hoodie. Nobody told him about the uniform. Passover is a celebrity event. With many hundred thousand people in town, only a small percentage actually get to the temple to attend to the worship of God. Other red-carpet activities are very distracting. Prominent Romans and Jews are there to be seen. It is their Parade. It is like the Academy Awards or the Oscars. Best films and best acting are easily forgotten with celebrity antics taking the stage. Will the starlet's décolletage make the trip all the way to Tierra Del Fuego? What leading ladies are divorcing, adopting or in rehab? Who is insulting who, or spouting political nonsense? Oops! Did we forget this is Passover? God rescued his people from crushing slavery! That's what Passover is about!

And the sketchy crowd with Jesus.... radicals, country hicks from redneck Galilee, and ne'er-do-wells singing praises to a boondocks rabbi with a deep-South drawl.

My Father-in-law was a botanical wizard. He was a brilliant horticulturist. His gardens were as lush as Paradise! I would accompany Dad, to his VA appointments, because he didn't hear well. One impertinent doctor asked me, "Has HE (impersonal pronoun alert) had a stroke or does HE always talk that way?"

Ah replahed slowly, with commensurate disrespect, "Mistah Terral is from Loosyana. Y'all gonna have ta listen mo careful and slow, son."

God just isn't kingly enough! We missed seeing him a lot of times because we were looking for something fancier or more regal. He is the King of all Reality; not just an obnoxious superstar of power and illusion.

It also seems like God doesn't follow my rational timetable. I'd like faster responses to prayer. Instant results. Like the crowd parading into Jerusalem. They shout, "HOSANNA, HOSANNA." The Hebrew word for 'Save Now!' Not tomorrow or next week, or the next election cycle. NOW! One would think I should know better; the ignorant child who started praying for a Harley at age 12. Fortunately, I was finally blessed with one at age 25. God gave me the gift of 13 years to wreck a bunch of cars and get a whole lot of stupid out of my system. Apparently, he had stuff for me to do.

SAVE NOW? He's already saved. He'll always be saving. Salvation is built-in original equipment in the Creation. We look for rosy futures and miss perfect presents. We pray, "Save me for tomorrow." God answers, "I saved you yesterday for today!" Change the title of that song, "You CAN always WANT what you got!"

But God also seems to push the boundaries. You gotta draw the line somewhere. Jesus was too easy on people. He hung around with anybody; rich, poor, smart, ignorant, Pharisees, tax collectors, crooks, lepers, amputees, the infectious and contagious, you name it.

He had the gall to hint around that Moses' rules could use some explanatory bylaws. Moses was against murder. That's good for the hardhearted. But if the only reason you don't murder is that, if you get caught, you'll get murdered back, how does that address the underlying problem? Anger leads to hard words, leading to threats, leading to throwing dirt clods, culminating in nuclear exchanges. It is Mutually Assured Destruction. Jesus is against vengeful anger. "Let it go, Believer!" Nobody wins. Drop the anger. Respond by not engaging.

I had a friend who was mad at me for over a year. I didn't have a clue why. He was miserable. His mood visibly fell when I walked in the room. Finally, I asked him, "Please tell me what I've done to upset you. I will do my best to correct it!" He told me that I called him 'Bossy.' I was stunned. I truthfully explained to him that the only time I have ever even thought of the word was in association with my pet cow named "Bossy." I'd call out to her in love, "C'mere Bossy. You are swollen. I can milk you and ease your pain."

Moses said to love your neighbor. Jesus said, "That's easy. It's lazy. Stretch a little. Expand your repertoire. Be real generous and love your enemy, too!" Moses said to be good. And Jesus said, "Try to be perfect and when you fail, accept the love of God, and try again." At least you'll be on the 'Up' escalator instead of the downward spiral.

While we are wondering about God's plans, another big problem is that He has fun. For many, if not most, religion and fun are not synonyms. Look at that frivolous parade. He got by with a little help from his friends. He got the donkey for a one-liner, and since the animal wasn't broken yet, I'll bet the first five minutes of that ride were some rodeo fun. Only God could last 8 seconds on that one!

About that donkey. A donkey, a mule, is the hybrid offspring of a jack *equus asinus* and a female horse, a mare. A donkey that's big enough to ride and has not yet been ridden, indicates a first-born mule. Normally, any first-born male animal is supposed to be given back to God in sacrifice. But there is a problem. Hybridization. A donkey is not kosher. He is by Mosaic law, unclean and cannot be presented as a sacrifice, and furthermore cannot be butchered and eaten. So, he must be redeemed, and until that happens, he can't be ridden or used as a pack animal.

Clean or unclean, he is the smartest and most valuable animal in your stable. He could be a pack animal or pull a plough. Wild in the field, he is probably already guarding other more vulnerable herds from predators, with his large teeth, and his slashing hooves. But he can't be useful until he is redeemed by something of equal value. Most rabbis would accept a fine sheep as the substitute. So, it becomes clear. This donkey will be redeemed by the finest sheep of all, the Perfect Lamb of God.

Jesus led a beautiful parade of the wonderful affirmation of the best humanity has to offer. Most parades these days have the strong element of Pilate's Parade, which came into Jerusalem from the west. "Look at Me! I'm powerful! You dare not disagree or voice opposition! If you do you will be persecuted. Cancelled." The Counter-Parade of Jesus had a different element: Look to God. He is merciful. Celebrate his world and humanity. Join the party. Be included!

The Pharisees in the Gospel ask Jesus to tell the disciples to be quiet. “Police your ranks, rabbi! Let’s not have a problem this Passover!” It is clear that Pilate’s temper is shorter than a rattlesnake’s inseam.

“Don’t rock the boat, Jesus. Tell your folks to keep it down. Ease up on the ‘local boy makes good on the trail ride stuff.’”

But God doesn’t take that request. Jesus answers with glee, that he could tell the crowds to be quiet, but if they did, then the rocks along the roadside would burst into praise. Here everybody is worried about a revolution and Jesus is joking about a rock opera. Maybe he was saying that Nature is more faithful than we are.

I watched in worried prayer as the stranded SpaceX crew were finally rescued. They were weakened from 8 months of zero gravity, and exposure to cosmic radiation. Re-entry and splash down would be a challenge, technologically, biologically, psychologically, and oddly enough politically as well.

I was astounded, when before any human contact arrived at the bobbing capsule, it was surrounded by a representative committee of one of the oldest living intelligent species on planet Earth, *Tursiops truncatus*. At 5 million years, the Bottlenose Dolphins presence on Earth has been ten times longer than *homo sapiens*, at only 500,000 years. They sent a representative committee to greet and congratulate our representative committee of explorers in deep alien environments, much like they did their explorations eons before. They welcomed us home in an aqueous parade, with playful, dancing joy!! Hosanna!!!

But the biggest surprise of Passion Week was yet to come. In all the world’s triumphal religious fantasies, no one ever imagined that a Savior could die, in disgrace. That’s not the way the story is supposed to go. It is unthinkable, to have a Divine Ruler and Savior who both creates the universe and then redeems it through suffering, and what always looks like the ultimate failure, death.

Look at Jesus riding into Jerusalem that day. It was fun, no doubt, and underlying that, a lot of doubt, no fun.

It was a parade of mixed emotions! Triumphant and joyful, and yet foreshadowing and sad. Meek and unassuming and yet statelier than the most noble king. It was a death-defying ride that set into motion the events of the final week of Christ’s life. God does save; here, always, everywhere! God saves NOW!!! Amen.

## **HYMN OF THE DAY**

*Ride On, Ride On in Majesty!*

## **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,**





## **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**

*Christ, the Life of All the Living*

**ELW 339**

**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**
- ♣ **Glenda Chavez**
- ♣ **David Dupleth**
- ♣ **Maureen Fredrickson**
- ♣ **Anna Gardner**
- ♣ **Fred Gardner**
- ♣ **Eliseo Gonzales**
- ♣ **Mike Hodges**
- ♣ **Nancy Lancaster**
- ♣ **David Magrill**
- ♣ **Kenneth Magrill**
- ♣ **Tracy Makris**
- ♣ **Gloria McGarvey**
- ♣ **Jeremy Mitchell**
- ♣ **Geraine Moore**
- ♣ **Dorothy Preuss**
- ♣ **Steve Schulze**
- ♣ **George Schwalm**
- ♣ **Jaime Urbanski**



*Next*

## **COUNCIL MEETING**

Council meeting will be Sunday, **April 27<sup>th</sup>**, 2025  
at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.

Church Council

## USHERS

**Month:** April

**Team #** 06

**Leader:** John Wenger

---

## LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS

### APRIL

- 6 Reader — Scott Wegner  
P/E — John Stokes
- 13 Reader — Ruby Schaper  
P/E — Jay Byerly
- 20 Reader — Charlotte Jaster  
P/E — Nancy Beamesderfer
- 27 Reader — Alma Byerly  
P/E — Steve Schulze

P/E stands for Prayers and Eucharist

Nancy Beamesderfer

---

## **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.

---

## HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICES

Palm Sunday	<b>April 13</b>	9:30 am –WC
Maundy Thursday	<b>April 17</b>	6:00 pm –FLC
Good Friday	<b>April 18</b>	7:00 pm –WC
Easter Prayer Vigil	<b>April 19</b>	9:00 am –6:00 pm
Easter Saturday Inf. Service	<b>April 19</b>	6:00 pm –AT
<b>Easter Day</b>	<b>April 20</b>	
Easter Sunrise		7:00 am –WC
Easter Breakfast		8:00 am –FLC
Pre-service Organ Concert		9:00 am --WC
Traditional Worship Service		9:30 am –WC

---

### **EASTER SATURDAY INFORMAL SERVICE**

Please note that we will not have an Easter Vigil Service.

We will have an Easter Saturday Informal Service  
on **April 19**, at 6:00 p.m. in the Atrium.

Pr. Jim Berggren

---

### **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 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. 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!

---

## **FRIENDSHIP CLUB**

The Friendship Club will **NOT** be meeting on April 19,  
because it falls on Easter weekend.

Our next meeting will be Saturday, **May 17**.  
We will have a pot-luck at the church.

Nancy Beamesderfer

---

## **LAST DAY FOR ORDERING LILIES**

Today is the last day to order an Easter Lily.

Our Sanctuary always looks so beautiful with the Lilies  
celebrating our Risen Lord.

Order forms are available in the Narthex and Atrium.

Please complete the form and place the envelope in the basket.

Plants are \$10.<sup>00</sup> each and may be picked up after the 9:30 Easter Service.

Thank you!

Sharon Wagner

---

## **ALTAR FLOWERS**

Altar Flowers are donated by Warren and Penny Schick  
in celebration of their Wedding Anniversary.

---

## **BIRTHDAY PARTY**

All friends at Holy Cross are invited to celebrate Ernest Luker's 99<sup>th</sup>  
birthday on Saturday, **April 19**, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

Or if you wish you can mail a birthday card at  
7707 Alderney Dr. Houston, TX 77055

For more information, please contact Dee - cell 713-922-0460

---

<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	4/13/2025	1 pm — 4:30 pm
	Sunday	5/18/2025	1 pm — 4:30 pm
	Sunday	6/15/2025	1 pm — 4:30 pm
Adult & Pediatric CPR *CPR only (\$85) *CPR + First Aid (\$99)	Saturday	4/5/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	5/10/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	6/7/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	6/21/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
Basic Life Support (for Healthcare Providers and Professional Rescuers) (\$89)	Friday	4/4/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	4/12/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Friday	5/9/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	5/17/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	5/24/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Friday	6/6/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	6/14/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
CPR Instructor Course (\$299)	Saturday	5/3/2025	9 am — 5:30 pm
	Friday	5/30/2025	9 am — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	6/28/2025	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

## 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*

**1—4:30 p.m.**     *SST Adult CPR —MR/YR*

### THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS

14 Mon	15 Tues	16 Wed	17 Thurs	18 Fri	19 Sat
<p><i>11—12 ELC Chapel —WC</i></p> <p><i>7—8 pm Boy Scouts mtg. —FLC room</i></p>	<p><i>11—12 ELC Chapel —WC</i></p>	<p><i>No Roundtable Group today</i></p> <p><i>11 am Choir practice —CL</i></p> <p><i>No Bible Study today</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>6 pm—FLC</b> <b><u>MAUNDY THURSDAY</u></b></p> <p><i>8 pm AA Women mtg. — FLCA</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7 pm—WC</b> <b><u>GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE</u></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>9 am—6 pm</b> <b><u>PRAYER VIGIL</u></b></p> <p><i>1—5:30 pm SST BLS —MR/YR</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>6 pm —AT</b> <b><u>EASTER SATURDAY INFORMAL SERVICE</u></b></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