

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

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713-686-8254

Rev. Jim Berggren

May 25, 2025

Sixth Sunday of Easter

WORSHIP SERVICE

PRELUDE

GATHERING SONG

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

ELW 834

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: ***Bountiful God, you gather your people into your realm, and you promise us food from your tree of life. Nourish us with your word, that empowered by your Spirit, we may love one another and the world you have made, 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

May 25, 2025 – Sixth Sunday of Easter

FIRST READING: Acts 16:9-15

⁹ During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ ¹⁰ When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

¹¹ We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, ¹² and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. ¹³ On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴ A certain woman named Lydia, a worshipper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. ¹⁵ When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.’ And she prevailed upon us.

The word of the Lord.

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

THE PSALM

Psalm 67

SECOND READING: Revelation 21:10, 22:1-5

¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

22 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ Nothing accursed will be found there anymore. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; ⁴ they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign for ever and ever.

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 John 5:1-9

⁵ After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

² Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. ³ In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralysed. ⁵ One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, ‘Do you want to be made well?’ ⁷ The sick man answered him, ‘Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.’ ⁸ Jesus said to him, ‘Stand up, take your mat and walk.’ ⁹ At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

Now that day was a sabbath.

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 John 13:31-35

³¹ When he had gone out, Jesus said, ‘Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³² If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³ Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, “Where I am going, you cannot come.” ³⁴ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

Congregational response: Praise to you, O Christ.

YOUTUBE VIDEO – https://youtu.be/kq_Z3fbwN6w

EASTER 6C 5/25/25 JOHN 5.1-9

DO YOU WANT TO BE STRONG?

Viktor showed up at the Lindsborg Municipal Swimming Pool one hot summer day. He was Russian. He spoke perfect English with a slight accent. He was a soldier at Fort Riley, so we figured he slipped away from a swimming or gymnastics team, got asylum, and then enlisted as a pathway to citizenship. He was an old man....at least 21.

He had heard about our pool and had driven 75 miles to try it out. The pool had three springboards, the one in the middle a three-meter. The pool was 10 feet deep, with 25-meter lanes. We watched Viktor swim 4 lengths, 100 meters underwater and then surface, barely winded. Amazing.

Viktor watched us children play in a contest of who could displace the most water with a dive. There were Cannonballs, Can-Openers, Barrel Rolls, Watermelons, Depth-Charges, and Preacher’s Seats. All calculated positions to enter the water and cause the biggest splash. All spring, during Track practice, Danny, David and I discussed new dives, waiting for Memorial Day and the pool to open. Who can make the biggest splash, and how?

Viktor watched us carefully while patiently waiting in line for his first time on the 3-meter board. When it was his turn, he climbed the 10-foot ladder, adjusted the fulcrum as far forward as it would go for the tightest spring, and went out to the end of the board for a couple of test bounces. Our curiosity was piqued. Danny, David and I, looked at each other and said, “This oughta be good!”

Viktor stepped back 3 paces, checked to make sure the life-guard was NOT looking, raised his arms and gracefully started his approach. His first bounce took him ten feet in the air while he was doing a languid full layout back somersault, a floating crucifix, jack-knifing at the apex (and dear Lord he is going to hit the diving board.)

And he did! He stuck the landing on the board perfectly, like a flying dismount from an Olympic Horizontal Bar. The diving board bowed deeper than I had ever seen, for a second bounce which launched him even higher. Going up, he tucked into a tight spin, and by the time his face passed the diving board coming down, he had spun three and a half times and opened up for a perfect entry. With the speed of freefall and the torque of spin, he arrowed perfectly perpendicular to the water at 50 miles per hour, and would slip past its surface with barely a ripple.

At the last millisecond he tucked tight again. The thunderous thud when he hit the water sounded like a crisp wet cannon. A solid six-inch column of water went up 20 feet in the air and when it opened up it made a shimmering prismatic parasol; in the Smoky Hill River Valley sun.

We had just witnessed a kinetic work of performance art, covering fifty feet of vertical space, (up 10, down 10, up 10, down 20) in 4 dimensions in 4 seconds, painted by the brush of a soaring, spinning human body. A Masterpiece!!!

We were stunned. Breathless. Mouths agape, we were in the presence of an Olympian. Viktor didn’t even use the ladder. Coiled like a spring at the bottom of the pool, he shot up out of the water like a seal being chased by an orca, barely touching the deck with his hands as he sprang to his feet and walked over to Danny, David and me, and asked, “You guys want to just splash around all summer, or do you want to learn how to dive?”

On this Memorial Day, I lift up Danny and David, dear friends and companions at the swimming pool. They gave their lives for our country, in Vietnam, 4 and 5 years after this miracle moment in time!!

The Pool of Bethesda, began its life around 800 BC when a dam was built across the Beth Zeta Valley as a reservoir for rainwater and spring water bubbling out of the hillside. 200 BC, the Jewish High Priest, Simon II, enclosed the channel to form a shallow pool on the south downhill side of the dam. Near the Sheep Gate, this downstream pool was used to bathe and clean the sacrificial sheep. With five porches the upstream pool had something for everyone: A place for invalid worshippers, of Asclepius, the Greek god of healing, a place for bathers and swimmers, a place for a brisk business in concessions, and on the fringes of the pool a place for squatters, beggars, and the chronically homeless.

At its deepest the pool was 40 feet deep. You better know how to swim. The water rippled from the welling springs and was sometimes turbulent with seismic activity common to the Jordan Rift Valley which extends deep into Africa. There were chambers, caves and shallow baths all around, some of which gave the priests and priestesses of Asclepius, underground access, to install billows into boreholes to pump air into the pool and cause bubbling like a Jacuzzi. Offerings could be solicited to elicit bubbling. Helpers could be hired to manage getting people into the water. It

was lucrative. It was a racket. You could pay to get wet and get well. Food, wine, drinking water, and towels were also available for a nominal fee. It was strong economic competition with the Temple offerings.

That's the pool. Now here's the man. In Greek, the word for paralyzed is paralytos. Here is a surprise. That word is not in the text. Astheneia is the word that John uses. It means, strengthlessness, weakness, impotence, infirmity, and sickliness. That's the empathetic, positive-spin translation of the word. A few more negative synonyms include; sluggish, stagnant, inert, slack, indolent, idle and lazy. Let's be nice and stick with "strengthless." A multitude of people with these characteristics are described as habitués of this pool. Jesus has been there many times for many holy day celebrations. He knows exactly what to expect.

The strengthless man has been there for 38 years. That's longer than the average lifespan of a man back then. He must be doing pretty well. Jesus saw him every year while attending religious festivals. City children were Jesus's friends. The pool was a fun place to cool off and meet people. Jesus had probably seen this strengthless man, plying his trade for maybe 25 years. The strengthless man as an infant and child would have been a beggarly goldmine for his hungry family.

When he reached adulthood at age 12, his career path was set. He lived at the pool. The pallet Jesus tells him to pick up and walk away with, is not a beach towel. It is not a yoga mat. It is a bed made of branches, twigs, leaves and fronds. It would be heavy and awkward to move. Moving it would make you lose your place, close to the pool, where almsgiving was most generous.

Some scholars say this represents the common Jewish people kept weak and dependent on the debilitating roman laws and rabbinical traditions. It might simply mean that anybody can get stuck and Jesus can jar them into action. On the other hand, John, the Gospel writer, is a master of language and he has fun with it. In Greek it would sound something like this: Jesus tells the weak man, pick up your krabbaton on the sabbaton and periepatei. That's funny. It sounds delightful. And it rolls off your tongue better than terse, monosyllabic Angle-Saxon speech, "pick up your bed and walk, it was the day-off."

The man who has capitalized on being perceived as a weak victim, does not ask for healing. He is doing well. He would not welcome a radical change of lifestyle. Faith is not mentioned, or an issue here, unless you buy into the magic water scam. Clearly neither Jesus nor the man believe in that silliness. 38 years was time enough for Continental Drift to drop him in the pool without him moving a muscle. Jesus doesn't do anything that resembles a healing ritual or a doctor/patient patronage, where treatment gets results and you pay.

It is a simple set up. Jesus saw him, knew him, and said to him, "Do you want to be strong?" Once again, we have a Greek word that means healthy, whole, restored to family and faith community, sound in body, mind, opinion, view and logic, strong, and clean and hygienic.

And this man doesn't even consent to these improvements. He's happy being stuck. Jesus is NOT comfortable with him being stuck.

There was a man who had really bad body odor. He went to the doctor. The doctor gave him a thorough examination. He said, "I can't find anything wrong with you but you really stink!? What do you do for a living?"

The man said, “Well, I work at the airport cleaning and emptying the toilets on the airplanes. I work under the plane. And a lot of blue water and excretions spill on me.”

The doctor said, “It smells like you need to find a new job.”

The man protested, and said, “What??? And get out of aviation???”

When Jesus encountered the weak man, he saw potential. He didn’t see deficiency. He saw soundness and wholeness lurking in the wings. He saw someone who had given up and all he needed to do was stand up.

We have things that prop us up in our stuckness. The magic words. The healing pools. The comfortable pallet. The steady income. The pitiable and profitable weakness. The excuses. And the many logical reasons why not.

Jesus says to take your bed. Don’t return to weakness. The mat is a welcome “trigger.” As long as the mat is near the pool, the weak man will go back and relapse into cozy hopelessness: Stuck in the manageable worries of weakness.

Jesus redirects our focus away from the pool and toward God. One can see the Temple from the Pool. Jesus reconnects us to God out of the isolation of the worldly worries. Get off the couch and get involved.

Jesus asks, “Do we want to be strong?” What is our impediment? Is it self-imposed? Where I am comfortably stuck? What do I need to change or let go? Is there anger or grief, or holding back forgiveness that weakens?

And Jesus makes us sound, healthy and whole. He does it, no questions asked. Before we even know it is necessary. No stipulations other than pick up the impediment and walk away with it. Jesus doesn’t even check us to see if we are deserving or not. He simply proceeds to make us sound and whole.

This is the good news: Jesus came into the world that we may have life and have it abundantly. John 10:10. Amen. Do you want to be strong?

HYMN OF THE DAY

Come Down, O Love Divine

ELW 804

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

“What Wondrous Love Is This”

arr. by John S. Dixon

THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful*

ELW Hymn 142

THE OFFERING PRAYER

All pray together: Risen One, you have gathered us around your table of grace along with these gifts we bring. Come among us again, breathe your life into us, and enliven us with this meal, that we may live as your risen body in the world. 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: Living One, in this feast you have made yourself known to us. Send us now to tell of your wonders, sing of your glory, and proclaim your risen life to a wounded and weary world.

Congregation: Amen.

THE BLESSING

SENDING SONG *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light* ELW 815

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**
- ♣ **Bill Carty**
- ♣ **Glenda Chavez**
- ♣ **Darlene Fournier**
- ♣ **Maureen Fredrickson**
- ♣ **Anna Gardner**
- ♣ **Fred Gardner**
- ♣ **Mike Hodges**
- ♣ **Charlotte Jaster**
- ♣ **Bubba Johnson**
- ♣ **Wendy Lambeth**
- ♣ **Nancy Lancaster**
- ♣ **Kelly Langridge**
- ♣ **David Magrill**
- ♣ **Kenneth Magrill**
- ♣ **Jeremy Mitchell**
- ♣ **Geraine Moore**
- ♣ **Steve Newberry**
- ♣ **Dorothy Preuss**
- ♣ **Wayne Schaper**
- ♣ **Joel Selzer**
- ♣ **Randy Slater**
- ♣ **George Schwalm**
- ♣ **Jaime Urbanski**



COUNCIL MEETING

Council meeting will be Sunday **May 25th**,
at 11:00 a.m. in the Annex.

Church Council

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.

USHERS

Month: May

Team # 03

Leader: Linda Cuzzort

LAY READERS & ASSISTANTS

MAY

4 Reader — Mallory Hileman
P/E — Julie Kilkenny

11 Reader — Ike Thompson
P/E — Nancy Beamesderfer

18 Reader — Alice Braun
P/E — Sharon Wagner

25 Reader — Russell Richter
P/E — John Stokes

P/E stands for Prayers and Eucharist

Nancy Beamesderfer

HOMEBOUND CARE PACKAGE MINISTRY

We at Holy Cross Lutheran Church are excited to start a Homebound Care Package Ministry to support our homebound church community. Our goal is to provide small gifts and essentials to uplift their spirits and show them care.

What We're Doing:

- Creating care package with items like lotion, lip balm, pens, paper, puzzle books, toothbrushes, fans, candy, socks, trial size items, cosmetics, etc.
- Pastor Jim and others will distribute these packages to individuals as they see it.

How You Can Help:

- Donate small items that can go into the care packages. Even company freebies with or without logos are welcome!
- Monetary donations are also appreciated to help purchase items. Be sure to mark your donation for Care Package Ministry.
- Help with collecting/assembling the care packages.

Drop off your donations in the basket by the sign-in sheets at church. We will check it frequently to gather contributions.

If you have questions or need help, contact

- Julie Richter julsrichter@yahoo.com; (713) 464-3430
- Shannon Martin sl.martin@comcast.net; (713) 202-0083

Thank you for helping us make a difference!

VBS WILL BE HERE SOON!!!

**Vacation Bible School is coming back to Holy Cross Church
from July 28 through August 1.**

We are looking for volunteers to help with a variety of things, no experience required. It runs from 9:00 am-12:00 noon.

If you would like to sign children up for VBS week there is a link on the Holy Cross website to sign them up electronically. If you need a paper copy of the sign-up sheet, they will be available. The cost is \$30 per child.

Along with VBS, there will be a babysitting class for children ages 11—16 year-old. The cost will be \$70 for the first day, and \$10 for each of the next 2 consecutive days. It will run for 3 of the mornings.

Basic safety and CPR skills will be taught and at the end of the session the children will receive Red Cross certification.

Contact Wendy Lambeth for additional information, at wklambeth@comcast.net. It will be a wonderful week with some amazing children!

Wendy Lambeth

FRIENDSHIP CLUB

The Friendship Club will be meeting at the church for a pot luck super on **June 21**.

Please bring your favorite dish to share.

Remember, you DON'T have to be 55 in order to attend.

Hope to see y'all there!

Nancy Beamesderfer

SAFEGUARDS SAFETY TRAINING HOLYCROSS COUPON CODE FOR 15% DISCOUNT: HCLC2025			
CLASS	DAY	DATE	TIME
Adult CPR	Sunday	4/13/2025	1 pm — 4:30 pm
*CPR only (\$79)	Sunday	5/18/2025	1 pm — 4:30 pm
*CPR + First Aid (\$92)	Sunday	6/15/2025	1 pm — 4:30 pm
Adult & Pediatric CPR	Saturday	4/5/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
*CPR only (\$85)	Saturday	5/10/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
*CPR + First Aid (\$99)	Saturday	6/7/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
	Saturday	6/21/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
Basic Life Support	Friday	4/4/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
(for Healthcare Providers and	Saturday	4/12/2025	1 pm — 5:30 pm
Professional Rescuers) (\$89)	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	Saturday	5/3/2025	9 am — 5:30 pm
(\$299)	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 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*

11:00 a.m. *Council Meeting —FLCA*

THIS WEEK AT HOLY CROSS

26 Mon	27 Tues	28 Wed	29 Thurs	30 Fri	31 Sat
MEMORIAL DAY Office closed		<i>10 am Roundtable Group —VR</i> <i>11 am Choir practice —CL</i> <i>12 pm Bible Study —AT</i>	 <i>8 pm AA Women mtg. —FLCA</i>	<i>9—5:30 pm SST CPR Instructor Course —MR/YR</i>	 <i>6 pm Saturday Informal service —AT</i>

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